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'ALL WHITES' DEFEAT ALL WHITES

By Peter Damalas

The 2006 World Cup campaign began in unfamiliar fashion for both Australia and New Zealand at Hindmarsh Stadium on Saturday night.

The match at least panned out as expected, with the home side dominating the territory and possession, and creating a flurry of chances, while the Kiwis caused some concerns on the counter-attack.

A well-taken free kick from star midfielder Marco Bresciano in the 40th minute proved to be enough for Frank Farina,s side in what was the first hurdle on the road to World Cup qualification in Germany in two years time.

The Socceroos coach was happy with the result, but acknowledged the fact that the team did not capitalise on the many opportunities created by the midfielders.Farina paid tribute to the Trans-Tasman rivals.

"New Zealand always deserve credit and they'll always make it tough.

Italian based Vince Grella put in another strong performance, and he is looking very much the player to take over from former captain Paul Okon in the holding role in midfield. Beside him, Josip Skoko also got through a great deal of work, while Emerton continued where he left off in the second match against Turkey, causing problems on the right.

Bresciano's ingenious displays of late may have helped ease a selection headache for Frank Farina when it comes to the important play-off matches next year.

The 24-year old is likely to alternate with Harry Kewell in support of Mark Viduka when all three play together.

With the Kiwi threat now out of the way, Farina may rotate his squad and give some game time to the likes of Jade North, Patrick Kisnorbo and Adrian Madaschi in defence, an area where Australia lack real depth.

Chile currently occupy the fifth slot in the CONMEBOL section of World Cup qualifiers, although that will certainly change in the next week as two more rounds of matches take place. The big match is Brazil against Argentina, but the Venezuela-Chile match in San Cristobal tomorrow morning AEST is perhaps more important from Oceania's perspective.

(For more information on the OFC Nations Cup turn to page 3)

TV COVERAGE FRACAS

By Mark Stavroulakis

Many Socceroo spectators were left wondering whether the game of soccer was to be promoted the correct way after no television station covered the first Socceroo clash between fierce rivals New Zealand in the OFC Nations Cup last Saturday evening.

2KY Soccer Fever announcer Paul Williams spoke to SBS's Les Murray on why the television station did not have the game shown on the box, instead having the World Track Cycling in its place.

"We were told six months prior to the event about the OFC Nations Cup from the ASA which in television terms is rather late", Murray said on the show.

Television stations run off organized calendars and schedules during the year and have accurate dates pencilled in for various events.

The fact that the ASA did not know when the scheduled kick-off for the Nations Cup only hammered the process of telecasting the game live.

In what has been a busy month for the Roos in their promotional matches against Turkey via its 20 thousand plus supporters watching both Sydney and Melbourne games, now was the time to pump the code up even more in soccer's need for promotion.

It was a case of 'missing the boat' once again for the Australian game; any more occurrences such as this could further damage the process of rebuilding the game for the better and getting out of the doldrums it currently surfaces in.

MARCONI TO HOST NSW'S MAIN EVENT

By Mark Stavroulakis

Marconi Stadium could possibly be the venue where this year's NSW Premier League Grand-Final will take place according to close *ABSW* sources.

The plush surroundings of the Fairfield based venue, once used by NSL club Marconi, will be an ideal venue that could host the main event on Sunday 13th of June.

Bankstown Lions have surprisingly taken out the first spot in qualifying for the Grand-Final after defeating the Belconnen Blue Devils in a highly entertaining match 4-3.

St George will face the Blue Devils this week in a match that will see the victor take on the Lions in the coveted final game of the season in NSW's top flight league.

A major announcement is set to take place prior to kick-off regarding the future of the NSW Premier League that will surprise the hopeful thousands of spectators on the day.

Its believed that former NSL clubs Sydney Olympic, Sydney United, Marconi Stallions and the Wollongong Wolves have all been confirmed as the new clubs that could headline a new 16-team NSW Premier League competition.

The eagerly anticipated return of club football is certainly around the corner with SOCCER NSW's sources stating that next year will be a year to remember.

With the APL still in limbo, SOCCER NSW has moved an extra step in wanting to promote the game for the better starting from grassroots level.

A momentous event will bring down the curtain on what has been a wonderful year for the NSW Premier League that has showcased a number of former National League stars which have made the competition that more appealing.

Johnny Warren Charity Golf Day

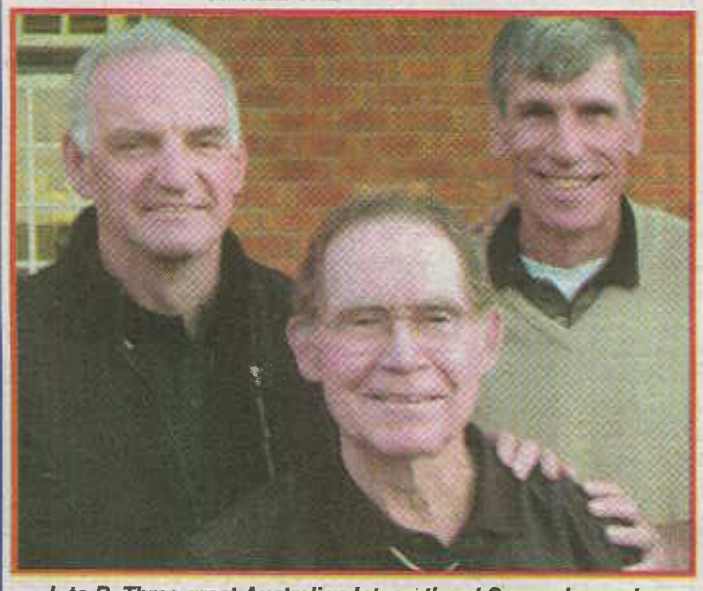
By John Economos

LAST Thursday morning, no less than 125 sporting indentities converged into the small picturesque NSW township of Jamberoo, to participate in the 'Johnny Warren Charity Golf Day'.

This large contingent of sporting indentities included many former Australian Soccer Internationals such as the great Johnny Watkiss, lethal goalscoring midfielder Ray Baartz, the enormously powerful goalkeeper Ronnie Lord, highly industrious goalscorer Brian Smith,

Australian 1956 Olympic Games skipper Bobby Bignell, World Cup goalkeeper Jimmy Fraser, goalkeepers Billy and Andy Henderson, Denis

Yaager, Barry Salisbury and Adrian Alston to name a few.



L to R, Three great Australian International Soccer Legends: Ray Baartz (lethal goalscoring midfielder), Ronnie Lord (the magnificent, powerful goalkeeper), and Johnny Watkiss the priceless triple World Cup campaigner-centre-back, midfielder or striker.

This nostaligic Golf Day was jointly organised by Ross and Jamie Warren to help raise funds for the Cancer Foundation.

Following a full round of enjoyable golf on the lush links of the Jamberoo Golf Course, the large contingent of former sporting greats gravitated across the road and piled into the historic 147 year old Jamberoo Pub for a very sumptuous long lunch.

After lunch following numerous presentations of trophies that were made, this was followed by a fund-raising auction for the Cancer Counciul of NSW.

Most tragically Johnny Warren the former Australian World Cup who was first diagnosed as a Cancer sufferer in November 2002, was unable to attend this fabulous nostalgic Golf Day at Jamberoo held in his honour.

Last Friday week Warren was rushed to a hospital in Sydney with a severe attack of pneumonia.

Despite making a very slow recovery during the week, Warren's specialists flatly refused him permission to make the journey down to Jamberoo to meet his loyal and former International team-mates.

This wonderful Golf Day was jointly sponsored by Qantas Airways Limited, Carlton United Breweries, the historic Jamberoo Pub, Jamberoo Golf Club and Coca-Cola.

St George Resurrected while Bankstown march on

Blacktown's Adam Kwasnik shoots on target against the Saints last week — turn to page 16 for more details on the 2004 Premier League final series.

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aussie*abroad*

BY DANIEL KUZIOW

Kasey Wehrman has blasted Lillestrom management, accusing them of snubbing him this season.

The Australia international told NRK: "I don't feel that either the manager Arne Erlandsen or director of sport, Frank Gronlund has respect for me."

Wehrman incurred the wrath of LSK officials after walking out of training last week. The Aussie was furious after being informed that he wouldn't be considered for the team's upcoming game.

"His reaction lacked respect for the club and his team-mates. We can't tolerate that," said Erlandsen. "I want to play for Lillestrom, but if I'm not allowed to do that, I must go," concluded Wehrman.

*****

Birmingham City co-owner David Sullivan says the club will sit down with Stan Lazaridis around Christmas to discuss a new contract.

Sullivan said: "He's become a better player. He lost his way under Trevor Francis towards the end and Steve Bruce seems to have got him motivated.

"He's 32 in August so he's not getting any younger and it doesn't make sense to go handing out long-term deals in this kind of situation.

"Stan, though, is a valuable player to us either on the left wing or at leftback, where Steve (Bruce) might see his eventual future."

*****

1860 Munich want to hold onto Aussie centre-forward Paul Agostino next season.

After suffering relegation this week, 1860 are expected to sell several of their top names, including Bayern Munich target Benny Lauth.

However, Lions management are keen to see Agostino remain with the club next season and lead the team's attack as they seek to bounce straight back to the Bundesliga.

Fenerbahce and promoted FC Nurnberg have both expressed interest in the Australia international striker.

*****

George Leekens is expected to take his Mouscron defender, Steve Laybutt, with him to Ghent next season.

Leekens signed a two-year deal with Ghent this week and is set to snap up Laybutt, who is off contract after an outstanding season with Mouscron.

Laybutt was prepared to stay with Mouscron, but management decided they could not afford the Australia international.

*****

Leeds United have turned down an approach from Galatasaray for striker Mark Viduka.

The Turkish giants wanted to sign the Australia international on-loan for 12-months and were willing to cover Viduka's entire salary.

But Leeds are looking for a straight cash deal and are also considering an enquiry from Middlesbrough.

*****

Rangers defender Craig Moore is refusing to speculate on reports linking him with a summer move to Everton.

The Australian defender has a further season to run on his present deal at Ibrox and has expressed concerns over what he perceives as a lack of ambition from the Glasgow club which has incurred the anger of boss Alex McLeish.

Moore is currently in his native Australia on international duty and he was reserved when asked to comment on reported interest from Everton.

"I cannot comment at this time," he told Australian TV.

"You will have to speak to my agent.

"I really can't say anything, let's just leave it at that."

*****

Ghent are chasing out-of-contract Aberdeen striker David Zdrilic.

The Australia international is being released from Pittodrie and has expressed a desire to remain in Scotland.

But new Ghent coach George Leekens is hoping to convince Zdrilic, who has played for Walsall in England and Unterhaching in Germany, to move to Belgium.

Abbas Saad considering opening a football academy in Singapore

*****

Former Aussie striker Abbas Saad is considering opening a football academy in Singapore.

Saad is a legend in Singapore thanks to his three years with the Lions and his heroics in the Malaysian Cup.

"I've been wanting to help since day one, man. And I come directly from the youth policy that bred Harry Kewell, Mark Viduka, Brett Emerton, Lucas Neill...I can do a junior programme any time," he told the Straits Times.

"The game's in my heart all the time, and now I love being involved with kids. I'm willing and passionate, but what sort of response will Abbas Saad get in Singapore?"

Saad also revealed he's been heavily involved in sending Australian players to the S-League and urged clubs to increase its wages for foreigners.

"The foreign players were well below my standard, so what sort of entertainment can one get? That's also because the clubs pay only $2,000 a month. Make it $5,000, man, and I'll send you much better players.

"Then everything will improve - the standards, the crowds, the country.

"The poor fans are denied the true meaning of watching football at the stadium. Live football on television will never be the same as in the flesh."

*****

Pahang striker Ante Milicic is returning to Malaysia after being replaced in Australia's squad for the upcoming Oceania Nations Cup.

Milicic made his international debut against Turkey on Monday night, but is making way for the return of Paul Agostino (1860 Munich) and John Aloisi (Osasuna).

"It was always going to be that way. There was no point me staying here when I knew they were coming," Milicic told the Daily Telegraph.

"Obviously I would have liked some more game time but the same thing happened with Max Vieri when he was called into the squad against South Africa. "I had a chat with Frank and told him that whenever he needs me I'll come.

"It's better for me to go back and play for Pahang. I have been pleasantly surprised by the standard of the competition there. It's better than I thought."

*****

Geylang United's Aussie coach Scott O'Donell is chasing former Parramatta Power striker Brendon Santalab.

O'Donell was forced to release Aussie import Milan Blagojevic last week because of injury and hopes to bring young Santalab back to the S-League as his replacement.

The Aussie striker struck 23 goals last season, despite joining them only last June.

*****

Leicester City are set to hold talks with out-of-contract Manchester City midfielder Danny Tiatto.

The Australia international fractured his jaw in two places on Friday night playing for Australia against Turkey.

West Brom are also interested in Tiatto, though his injury will disrupt the midfielder's pre-season.

*****

Blackburn Rovers fullback Lucas Neill has been linked with a move away from Ewood Park.

The Evening Chronicle says the Australia international could be on his way from Rovers, with Liverpool and Newcastle United keeping an eye on developments.

Newcastle boss Sir Bobby Robson had a close look at Neill last year and is now in the market for a new right-back.

*****

Australian midfielder Tim Cahill has promised to stay with Millwall and lead the club into the English Premier League.

Cahill has been linked with moves to a number of Premiership clubs since scoring the goal that lifted the south London club into the FA Cup final.

However the 24-year-old said he is determined to stick with the team that lost 3-0 to Manchester United in Saturday's final.

"I've been linked with every premiership club over the last six years," Cahill told Britain's free daily newspaper Metro.

"But I've got a year left on my deal and I want to get Millwall into the premiership.

"Hopefully we gained some respect from the final."

*****

Remember this name Shervin K'Adeli. At the tender age of 11, the youngster has just been snapped up by German Bundesliga side Eintracht Frankfurt.

A student of the highly acclaimed Dusan Purac Soccer Academy based in Manly Vale, Shervin has been a stand-out ever since he was able to kick a ball at the age of 3.

Shervin's father Ahmad who also was a great soccer talent travelled to Germany to visit relatives. Before going on the trip Ahmad and Shervin made inquires at major European football soccer clubs asking whether Shervin could train with them for a day just to get a look at the standard of play and to have the opportunity to see their amazing operations.

By chance while Shervin was in Frankfurt, Eintracht were having their youth trials for the season.

Ahmad met with the club and talked them into giving him a chance to trial.

Thousands of applicants were seen but only 160 were chosen to trial.

Famous Italian coach Giovanni Montello was rather impressed with Shervin's skills and offered one of only 8 places in Eintracht's squad.

He is one of the youngest players in the 125 year history of the club to be chosen. Shervin and his family and now considering moving to Germany to allow this talented youngster to take his opportunity to the next level.

Dusan Purac's soccer academy has produced over 500 representative players. Some of these are now Australian internationals and NSL players.

A select few of his original students are new looking at options in Europe.

Purac was certainly the man that taught Shervin all his skills with six years tuition.

*****

Stockport County have secured midfielder Mark Robertson to a new contract.

The Australia international has agreed a two-year deal with the Hatters that will keep him at Edgeley Park until June 2006. "It was an uncertain time for me because I was unsure whether to extend the lease on my house or not," Robertson told the club's official website. "With a young family I needed the security of a contract and I can now concentrate on getting back to full fitness. "There's a great bunch of lads here at County and there's no reason why we can't be pushing for the play-offs next year."

*****

Les Pogliacomi has signed a new contract with Oldham Athletic.

The Aussie goalkeeper has been a regular in the Oldham goal since his move from Parramatta two years ago. Pogliacomi has signed a contract until June 2006

Eintracht Frankfurt bound: Shervin K'Adeli (right) shown with the man that taught him everything soccer skills coach Dusan Purac.

OFC Nations Cup 2004

Solomon's win Melanesian battle

VANUATU 0
SOLOMON ISLANDS 1

The Solomons Islands have prevailed 1-0 over Melanesian rivals Vanuatu at the Marden Sports Complex today in what was a fairly listless encounter.

Both sides struggled for cohesion and composure at times, with Solomons veteran Batram Suri netting the first goal of the 2004 OFC Nations Cup from the penalty spot.

Suri's early second half strike was just reward for the Solomons, who although falling well short of flattery, thoroughly deserved their first up win.

Although not entirely pleased with his sides performance, Solomons coach Alan Gillett was thrilled with a first up win for his troops.

"I enjoy watching them play, but I didn't today," said Gillett after the match.

"We won ugly."

Vanuatuan coach Carlos Buzzetti would have been disappointed with the end result, but satisfied with the effort from his players.

Australian based strike pairing Etienne Mermer and Richard Iwai were the Vanuatuans best attacking options throughout the 90 minutes, but were ultimately unable to penetrate the Solomons stubborn defensive line.

Vanuatu: D Chilia (gk), G Gete, L Bibi, S Lauru (F Vava 71'), T Iautu, S Chilia, E Mermer, M Poida (J Maleb 75'), R Iwai, P Maki (A Qorig 46'), D Alick
Cautions: S Chilia 20'
Solomon Islands: S Aefi (gk), M Houkarawa (L Leo 90'), N Sale, A Maemae (M Toata 83'), B Suri, C Menapi, S Waita (J Samani 69'), G Omokirio, H Fa'arodo, P Kakai, G Suri
Cautions: A Maemae 27'
Goals: B Suri 51'P

Fijians shocked by Tahiti

FIJI 0
TAHITI 0

Fiji and Tahiti have played out an entertaining, yet goal less draw in the curtain raiser fixture at Hindmarsh Stadium.

A stalemate seemed inevitable in the end, despite the strong attacking intentions declared by both teams in what was a free flowing and intensely fought encounter that neither side deserved to lose.

The draw was not an ideal result for either side in their quest for a World Cup qualification berth, as they must now topple the highflying Solomons as well as upset Australia or New Zealand to force a berth in the top two.

Whilst the first half did not produce any goals, it was most certainly not devoid of goal scoring opportunities.

The respective NSL experienced players of both teams, Esala Masi for Fiji and Felix Tagawa for Tahiti, were instrumental in carving countless opportunities for their fellow front men.

Fiji came closest from a well-weighted Masi free kick towards the end of the half, which edged over the crossbar with Tahitian 'keeper Daniel Tapeta well beaten.

Tahiti found options in wide player Billy Mataitai, who constantly had Fijian custodian Simione Tamanisau in a panic with a series of fine crosses.

Fiji: S Tamanisau (gk), L Dau, E Baleinuku, V Toma, E Masi, T Waqa, V Toma, S Rokotakala, R Kumar, M Kainihewe (J Vesikula 78'), T Vulivuli (W Sabutu 87')
Cautions: T Vulivuli 57', M Kainihewe 72'
Tahiti: D Tapeta (gk), S Garcia, P Kugogne, J Li Waut, B Mataitai, V Simon, A Temataua, F Teuira, T Neuffer (H Labaste 66'), A Tchen (I Kautai 67'), F Tagawa (G Wajoka 84')
Cautions: None

Roos grab pole position

AUSTRALIA 1
NEW ZEALAND 0

The Qantas Socceroos have opened their OFC Nations Cup campaign with a dogged 1-0 victory over Trans Tasman rivals New Zealand.

A late first half free kick from Marco Bresciano sealed the win for the Aussies, who thoroughly dominated possession and chances throughout the ninety minutes.

Credit must go to the visitors though, who despite being largely written off before the match proved a hefty challenge for Frank Farina's men.

Kiwi coach Mick Waitt will take great pride from the performance of his charges, who, given a kinder bounce of the ball, may just have snatched an unlikely equalizer.

Ultimately though, the Qantas Socceroos have returned to the winners circle and coach Farina was a relieved man at the post match press conference.

"I'm happy with the win and with parts of our play," spoke Farina of the performance from his charges.

"But I know our finishing can be better and should be better."

The lead that the home side so richly deserved arrived after 40 minutes when Bresciano demonstrated his undoubted quality for Australia's soccer fans once more. Having been fouled by All White defender Tony Lochhead on the edge of the penalty box, Bresciano stepped up to calmly slot home a sweet right-footed shot to Mark Paston's bottom left.

Bresciano's opener was met with a sigh of relief from the Australia bench, who were starting to feel the pressure of a resilient Kiwi outfit.

Try as they might, and they most certainly did, the Qantas Socceroos were unable to penetrate the inexperienced New Zealand defence for the majority of the first stanza.

Napoli striker Vieri found himself on the wrong side of the linesman's flag on frequent occasions and the desperate defense of Kiwi pairing Steven Old and Lochhead negated the fine efforts of Brett Emerton and Stan Lazaridis down the flanks.

John Aloisi, one of three Adelaide locals that started the match, should have put the Qantas Socceroos ahead on 20 minutes after being fed a sublime through ball by Bresciano.

Osasuna's top marksman could only scuttle his tame effort wide of Paston with the goal at his mercy, much to the disappointment of his enthusiastic hometown crowd.

The same could be said for Vieri, who had a glorious opportunity in the latter stages of the half when latching on to a pinpoint cross from Emerton.

Paston was left with a relatively easy save after Vieri's header rocketed towards the Kiwi goal.

For all the home sides pressure, the All Whites almost took the lead midway through the half when a speculative effort from Vaughan Coveny forced a hurried save from Aussie 'keeper Zeljko Kalac, who parried Coveny's effort for a corner.

The second half contained much of the same from Australia, as they tried in vain to extend their lead.

Stan Lazaridis, again a pillar of consistency for the Qantas Socceroos came close to scoring his first international goal after 63 minutes, following a clever exchange with Bresciano from deep.

The Birmingham winger forced Paston into a quality low save, meaning the affable speedster will have to wait another game to break his unbelievable drought.

It was more a case of New Zealand grinding out a result that Australia come the end of the match, with the Kiwis seemingly contented with the narrow scoreline.

Kalac remained largely untroubled in the closing stages as the home side continued to press the opposition's goal.

Substitute Mile Sterjovski will rue a golden chance to push for a starting berth after he skewed a gimmie late in the match that would have doubled the Aussies lead.

In the end, the Qantas Socceroos finish round one of the OFC Nations Cup top of the group and in a positive frame ahead of their hectic schedule.

"New Zealand always deserve credit and they'll always make it tough," said Farina of the Qantas Socceroos traditional rivals.

"In general I thought we dominated the game, but give New Zealand credit because they worked hard and defended in numbers.

"They made it hard for us, but we expected that anyway."

Farina's counterpart was disappointed with the result, but ecstatic with the performance of his underdogs.

"Obviously we don't like losing," the Kiwi coach said bluntly after the match.

"It puts a bit of pressure on us for the remaining games but there's an awful lot of positives to come out when you look at the inexperience of some of our players in our back four".

Positively for Farina and the Qantas Socceroos, former youth starlet Adrian Madaschi made his long awaited senior debut, coming on for the injured Steve Laybutt.

Australia: Z Kalac (gk), S Laybutt (A Madaschi 73'), S Colosimo (J North 54'), T Vidmar, B Emerton, J Skoko, J Aloisi, S Lazaridis, V Grella, M Vieri (M Sterjovski 68'), M Bresciano
Cautions: J Aloisi 15'
Goals: M Bresciano 40'
New Zealand: M Paston (gk), D Mulligan, S Old, C Bunce, T Lochhead, I Vicelich, N Hickey (B Fisher 51'), L Bertos (S Smeltz 69'), S Elliott, V Coveny, R De Gregorio (D Oughton 78')
Cautions: D Mulligan 27'

Socceroo defender Jade North battles Brian Fisher during the Trans-Tasman clash last week.

"Oh come on referee, you've got to be joking" – John Aloisi protests a caution he picked up last week.

'Marvellous Great' Bresciano celebrates the only goal of the game.

OFC FIXTURES

MONDAY 31 MAY 2004

New Zealand v Solomon Islands	- 2.00pm	- Marden Sports Complex
Australia v Tahiti	- 5.30pm	- Hindmarsh Stadium
Fiji v Vanuatu	- 8.00pm	- Hindmarsh Stadium

WEDNESDAY 2 JUNE 2004

Australia v Fiji	- 2.00pm	- Marden Sports Complex
Tahiti v Solomon Islands	- 5.30pm	- Hindmarsh Stadium
New Zealand v Vanuatu	- 8.00pm	- Hindmarsh Stadium

FRIDAY 4 JUNE 2004

New Zealand v Tahiti	- 2.00pm	- Marden Sports Complex
Fiji v Solomon Islands	- 5.30pm	- Hindmarsh Stadium
Vanuatu v Australia	- 8.00pm	- Hindmarsh Stadium

SUNDAY 6 JUNE 2004

Tahiti v Vanuatu	- 2.00pm	- Marden Sports Complex
Fiji v New Zealand	- 5.30pm	- Hindmarsh Stadium
Solomon Islands v Australia	- 8.00pm	- Hindmarsh Stadium

* The top two nations from the Adelaide tournament will playoff later in the year for a spot in the 2005 FIFA Confederations Cup and will also play each other again next year for the right to play the fifth best CONMEBOL (South America) nation for a berth at the World Cup finals.

*Note – due to ABSW deadlines, we were unable to print out Monday's results. All results and statistics will feature in next week's issue.

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NSWIS HAIL EURO SUCCESS

The New South Wales Institute of Sport (NSWIS) squad recently returned from their annual tour of Europe. This was the fourth time the squad has travelled overseas and *ABSW* caught up with NSWIS Head Coach Kelly Cross to get his thoughts on the tour.

'I was very satisfied with the boys' performance. Every game was a hard one, and that was exactly what we were looking for' said Cross.

'When you consider our opposition were all professional top-flight clubs in their respective countries, and we faced many national team players, the lads did extremely well.'

NSWIS won 6 and lost 3 of their 9 games, and the losses were only by the odd goal.

A 4-2 in over PSV Eindhoven's Under-17s was a highlight, especially as NSWIS consists of Under-15s and Under-16s. 'PSV were a very good team but everything went right for us that day' said Cross. 'We had beaten Den Haag (The Hague) comfortably the day before, so it was good to play a much stronger side the day after and still come up with a win.'

Maybe fatigue was a factor when the boys faced Anderlecht for their third game in three days and went down 3-2, but Cross thinks otherwise. 'Anderlecht were probably the best team we faced on the whole tour. We will have a good look at the video and see what we can learn from them.'

NSWIS took a specialist Video Analysis Technician, Richard Green, away with them, and every game was filmed and saved on state-of-the-art computer software. Games were analysed every night and regular team meetings at the hotel base in southern Holland gave the boys feedback on their performance and that of the opposition.

NSWIS lining up with juniors from Borussia Dortmund after the match

'We took our own data projector and showed everything on the big screen.'

The NSWIS squad has been training full-time since selection last October, and Cross, along with Assistant Coach Chris Minol, wanted to see if they were on the right track. 'All of what we teach is based on analysis of the best players and best teams in the world, but we had to see how we compared to some of the best young players in Europe.

The results show we're doing OK, but we will have a close look at our opponents on the computer and see what we can improve. Last year, we picked up a few things especially from Ajax and Bayer Leverkusen, who were brilliant.'

Defensively, Cross believes NSWIS were on the same page as the European sides, but he has already identified some attacking points he can implement.

'It's all about learning from the experience. Coaches can learn a lot, as well as the players.'

After the Anderlecht game, NSWIS had a few days to recover, as well as a few training sessions at their base, and then faced Belgian heavyweights Racing Genk. 'We beat Genk 9-0 last year, but they put a few younger boys out then. This year they played their Under-17 side against us!

They were bigger lads, and very well-organised. We did well to get to 2-2, with two excellent goals from Daniel Miller and Nathan Burns but then conceded a sloppy goal from a corner in the last minute.'

The following night, the squad were up against 1 FC Koln in Cologne at the impressive Geissbockheim complex. NSWIS were rarely troubled by the Germans and recorded a 1-0 victory.

The next day, Borussia Dortmund were the opposition. 'We have a good relationship with Dortmund, and this year the game was played on the field adjoining the main stadium, an absolutely superb surface to play on. When our bus arrived, the gates opened and we drove inside the stadium and parked right next to the first-team dressing rooms. The boys thought they were playing a Champions' League game!'

After a hard-fought game, Dortmund ran out 1-0 winners, and NSWIS headed to Sweden with 3 wins and three losses under their belt.

The three biggest pro clubs in Stockholm were lined up, but by this time NSWIS were more than ready and won all three comfortably.

'All the Stockholm games were played on the latest artificial fields, and our lads loved it, Cross said.

AIK Stockholm were beaten 2-0, Swedish champions Djurgardens were dispatched 4-0, then Hammarby were on the wrong end of a 4-1 scoreline.

The nine game schedule was a big ask of the players, but the NSWIS staff are right up to date on the latest in preparation and recovery methods.

'The boys were well looked after, in terms of rest, recovery, injury management and nutrition. Our team trainer, Frank Liardet, is very experienced and they couldn't have asked for better care on and off the park.'

While on tour, the squad were taken to three big professional games. Willem II v PSV Eindhoven in Holland, and two derby matches. 'Borussia Dortmund versus VFL Bochum, Westfalen Stadium, 82,000 people, it doesn't get much better than that,' Cross explains, even though he was still on a high having heard before kick-off that his beloved Millwall had just reached the FA Cup Final in England!

The squad were also given a tour of the Swedish National Football Stadium in Rasunda. Robert Limpar, brother of ex-Arsenal star Anders Limpar, showed the boys the home and away dressing rooms (including saunas!), the press conference room, and the impressive Swedish National Team gear office, which has 3 full-time staff.

There was a hush of silence when Robert Limpar pointed out that Pele starred at the 1958 World Cup on the very field the boys were walking on. 'You don't get to do that too often,' said Cross. 'It made us all stop and think.'

All in all, a very successful and valuable three weeks. 'The boys were excellent, on and off the park, a real credit to their families and their clubs.'

What next for the NSWIS boys? 'There's a mid-year break now, then it's back into hard training right up to National Championships in late September.'

After more than a decade of success, the program is still going strong. If the NSWIS tradition is anything to go by, you will hear more of these boys in the future.

NSWIS SQUAD

NAME		CLUB	STATUS
Nathan	Burns	Blayney, Country NSW	2nd Year
Tayfun	Buyukkopru	MARCONI	2nd Year
Daniel	Cornett	SYDNEY UNITED	1st Year
Peter	Cvetanovski	BANKSTOWN CITY	1st Year
David	D'apuzzo	SYDNEY OLYMPIC	2nd Year
Jonathon	De Giorgio	MARCONI	1st Year
Marko	Jesic	MARCONI	1st Year
Daniel	King	MARCONI	1st Year
Daniel	Lima	SYDNEY OLYMPIC	2nd Year
Brendan	Maroney	BLACKTOWN CITY	2nd Year
Daniel	Miller	MARCONI	2nd Year
Andrew	Myles	NORTHERN SPIRIT	2nd Year
Jason	Naidovski	MARCONI	1st Year
Wade	Oostendorp	MARCONI	2nd Year
Nathan	Ralph	Southern Branch, Country NSW	1st Year
Andrew	Redmayne	CENTRAL COAST	1st Year
Simon	Shin	MARCONI	1st Year
Nathan	Smith	PARRAMATTA EAGLES	1st Year
William	Thom	NORTHERN SPIRIT	2nd Year
Benjamin	Vidaic	SYDNEY OLYMPIC	2nd Year

The NSWIS lads training in one of the many quality stadiums in Germany

NSWIS Tour of Europe 2004

HOLLAND

NSWIS .....3 **ADO Den Haag** 0
Daniel Miller 2, Ben Vidaic
NSWIS .....4 **PSV Eindhoven** 2
Daniel Miller 2, Ben Vidaic, Nathan Burns

BELGIUM

NSWIS .....2 **Anderlecht** 3
Daniel Cornett, Jason Naidovski
NSWIS .....2 **Racing Genk** 3
Nathan Burns, Daniel Miller

GERMANY

NSWIS .....1 **FC Koln** 0
Daniel Cornett
NSWIS .....0 **Borussia Dortmund** .1

SWEDEN

NSWIS .....2 **AIK Stockholm** 0
Ben Vidaic, Brendan Maroney
NSWIS .....4 **Djurgardens** 0
Ben Vidaic 3, Marko Jesic
NSWIS .....4 **Hammarby** 1
Will Thom, Ben Vidaic, Wade Oostendorp, Brendan Maroney

Tour Statistics

Played	Won	Drawn	Lost	For	Against
9	6	0	3	22	10

Cross sees future in squad

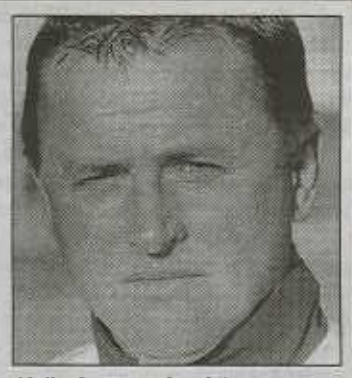
Known for being one of Australia's most recognized youth coaches, NSWIS head coach Kelly Cross believes that his current batch of youngsters have what it takes to make it in the big leagues.

Primmed as being the next stars of the Australian game, many of his twenty-man squad have shown promising signs of developing into what will hopefully be a new era in Australian youth football.

Seven players had the chance to strut their stuff on an international scale back in March after being included into Ange Postecoglou's provisional U17 Joeys squad.

After spending a week at the AIS, NSWIS stars William Thom, Wade Oostendorp, Andrew Myles, Tayfun Buyukkopru, Brendan Maroney, David Miller and Benjamin Vidaic all were being heavily looked at by the Australian coach.

No stranger to developing stars, Cross believes that his players have what it takes to make the final Australian squad proving more and more that the NSWIS rates amongst the best youth set-up in Australia.



Kelly Cross: NSWIS head-coach has a rather exciting group that could well become the next stars in our Australian game.

With no domestic league until the start of the new competition next August, most youngsters will see out their seasons with their youth clubs along with their commitments towards the NSWIS program that should see them progress in more ways than one.

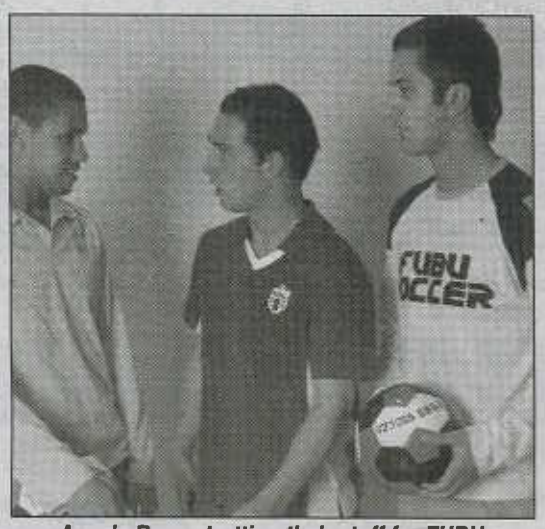
Sporting giants FUBU set to rock Australian Soccer

By Mark Stavroulakis

One of American's most influential sporting brands, namely FUBU, are set to hit the Australian soccer scene in late June in a bid to tap into the soccer market here in Oz.

The company set its sails ten years ago when it originally began from making only hats to now merchandising everything that has to deal with sport from clothes to shoes.

FUBU owner Daymond John mortgaged his home for $100, 000.000 turning half the house into a factory and the other into living space for team FUBU – not bad for a company that now turnovers almost $600,000,000 through global sales annually.Known celebrities such as boxer Lennox Lewis, movie star Denzel Washington and Hip-Hop artists LL Cool J & Foxy Brown are just some of the many people marketing the famous brand label.



Aussie Boys strutting their stuff for FUBU: (L-R) Patrick Kisnorbo - Scott McDonald and Daniel Rocco

The brand did start off essentially for the hip hop music industry but has since branched off to various other market factors such as sports with soccer being its next main target.

Australian sports such as AFL and NRL have already been taped by FUBU, but the company wants to deal with the world's most played sport – namely soccer.

FUBU international have engaged leading soccer specialists Tribal Sports Management to assist their development of a soccer range in this country. Based in Melbourne, Tribal will spread FUBU across the nation with its clothes made for off field wear targeting the fashion conscious market that will cover men, women and children through its comfortable fabrics and stylish designs.

The plush surroundings of a cosmopolitan Melbourne will be ideal headquarters for the brand to kick-start its promotion on soccer in Australia especially now with a new era set to dawn on the game in the coming months with the start of a new and improved eight-team league.

FUBU Soccer is a sign that corporate world that perhaps has no history with the sport see soccer as the way of the future.

The product is due to hit the retail market in late June with many retailers already placing their orders in stock across Australia.

D'AVRAY STAYS AS GLORY COACH

Mich d'Avray has been given the go-ahead to lead Perth Glory in the new Australian national competition.

Glory chairman Nick Tana said recently that he would seek a coaching replacement only if d'Avray did not want to continue with the club. "There will be no other coach unless Mich doesn't want the job," Tana told the West Australian. Meanwhile National Soccer League champions Perth Glory want prize money from next years FIFA World Club Championship to be pumped into the sports promotion and not banked by the participating team.

The chairman said that should an Australian team qualify for the tournament, which is worth $22 million, it should not be for the sole benefit of one club.

The Australian Soccer Association recently confirmed that the winner of the interim domestic league, scheduled for January/February next year.

BRESCIANO AND GRELLA PURE CLASS

By Mark Stavroulakis

Socceroo coach Frank Farina should be a relieved man after knowing that Australian stars Vince Grella and Marco Bresciano were at their best during the two-match series against Turkey.

Even though the Aussies went down in both matches, both midfield stars were the pick of the bunch in what looks to be a promising Australian squad.

Having played their junior football together the pair enjoyed playing off each other in their familiar roles: Bresciano the ball player and Grella the ball winner.

The pair have surely cemented a starting birth in Farina's squad for any up and coming internationals hailing a new era in the Australian national team.

At 24 Bresciano is certainly in his prime on both his international and domestic career.

Having had a sterling season with Serie A side Parma, the nippy attacking midfielder was one of the stand-outs of the season in Italy's prestigious league.

Scoring and creating a handful of goals for Parma, his rise to fame from his transfer from Empoli has been evident in more ways than one.

Marco still stands at being Australia's most expensive transfer from Empoli to Parma and already offers have flooded in from various clubs from Italy and England for the new season.

Bresciano prefers the Italian game, and Parma could well be lucky enough to land the star for yet another season.

Its true to say that no other Australian has made such an impact in the Serie A like 'Bresh'.

Parma finished fifth this year just missing out on a Champions League spot but a European entry to the UEFA Cup was a highly acclaimed reward for the side that struggled off the pitch.

Firing in all cylinders: The dynamic duo of Vince Grella (left) and Marco Bresciano (right) have their minds on World Cup qualification.

News of the club becoming insolvent through main sponsor Parmalat rocked the club during the year but that failed to drag down the side from finishing in the top half of the Serie A ladder.

His partner in crime and long time friend Vince Grella has also shot to fame in his career at Italy.

The 25-year-old was on a different scale to Bresciano this year after his side Empoli was relegated to Serie B next season.

Spending four seasons at the little Tuscan club, Grella has weighed up his options on his future and we could well see the aggressive midfielder take part with a new club next year.

Nevertheless, his appearances for his club and now his country have been flawless and it is safe to say that Vinny does play with his heart on his sleeve.

A player known not to back out of any challenge, Grella is fiercely known as being one of the toughest players in the Serie A and as AC Milan coach Carlo Ancelotti quoted in the La Gazzetta Dello Sport, Grella is a player that is needed in every squad in Italy.

Fiorentina have been alerted to Grella's aid in possibly wanting out from Empoli as the former Carlton star continues to impress his onlookers in a country known to be a tough competition to crack into.

The pair have surely put Australia on the map in the Serie A which surely stands as one of the best leagues throughout the world.

We always hear of how well our Australian stars are going in England which all credit to them is great but it's a shame that the pair have only been just realized by the many Australian soccer public.

O'Neill's ticket fiasco

By Roy Hay

While the Australian Soccer Association's new Chief Executive Officer John O'Neill is aiming to bring some new commercial ideas to the game, the recent series against Turkey shows that some old lessons have not been learned.

Not only that but the pricing policy for the two-match series is counter-productive in terms of the policy of attracting a broader Australian support for the Socceroos and the world game in this country. The cheapest seats for the game were over $50.00.

For years Australia has set prices for friendly matches against overseas teams at a level which will only attract those who were born in that country or their Australian-born descendants.

Those outside that very restricted demographic will only turn up in substantial numbers for competitive matches in World Cup qualifiers or the like at the prices charged.

Friendly games, even if an ersatz trophy is nominally at stake, are only of interest to the fanatics (and I use this term as a compliment to the dyed-in-the-wool Australian supporters) and those like myself who go along in hope of discovering some emerging Australian talent in the absence of the superstars.

Now in O'Neill's defence it could be argued that the prices were set when there was an outside possibility that Messrs Kewell, Viduka, Moore and company might have been available to play. But Kewell has made it abundantly clear that he is not going to travel for friendlies, while the timing of these matches meant that there was a strong probability that several players would still be involved in European matches, play-offs, Cup finals and the like.

The result of this policy was that various forms of giveaway, buy four tickets get one free, or a completely free distribution of a number of tickets by the Victorian Soccer Federation, had to be resorted to at the last moment, but with little significant impact on the size or composition of the crowd. All these did was to annoy those who had already shelled out for full-price tickets.

Was the recent Australia v Turkey game too overpriced? Here's an aerial view of the MCG on the night, you be the judge.

Now nothing in this comment should be construed as being critical of the marvellous Turkish-Australian supporters who turned up in their families and other groups and made the occasion in both Sydney and Melbourne.

Without them there would have been no spectacle and no atmosphere.

Even so they struggled to make Telstra Dome reverberate as under 29,000 is a derisory attendance for the national team after an absence from home soil of two years.

BILL TURNER CUP and BILL TURNER TROPHY

Round 1: Colo 8 Hawkesbury 1 Winmalee 2 Windsor 0, Emmaus College 8 St Pauls Grammar 0, Blacktown Boys 2 Riverstone 0, Sydney Grammar 3 Rose Bay Secondary 2, Hunter School PA 3 Hunter Christian 1, Griffith 3 Griffith Catholic 1, St Francis Leeton 5 Wade 2, Leeton 5 Coleambally Central 0, Barham 4 Hay 2, Xavier Albury 1 Murray 0, Smiths Hill 1 Keira 0, Illawarra Sports 3 Lake Illawarra 0, St Josephs Albion Park 2 Dapto 1, Woonona 3 Bulli 1, Figtree 3 Warrawong 2, St Johns Nowra 5 Nowra 1, Bombaderry 3 Shoalhaven 0, Bowral 3 Picton 1, Edmund Rice 4 Corrimal 0.

Round 2: Greystanes 3 Concord 2, All Saints Lakemba 7 Dulwich 1, Belmore Boys 4 Birrong Boys 3, Condell Park 2 Canterbury Boys 1, Granville Boys 2 Northmead 1, Sutherland Shire Christian 2 Our Lady of Lebanon 0, St Agnes 1 Kingswood 0, McCarthy Catholic 2 St Clair 0, Blaxland 1-4 Glenmore Park 1-2, Quakers Hill 1 Pat Bros Blacktown 0, Narrabeen Sports 5 The Forest 1, Killarney Heights 2 St Augustines 1, St Leo's Wahroonga 1 Masada College 0, Davidson 3 Baigowlah Boys 2, Holy Cross College 9 James Ruse Ag 0, Castle Hill 3 Asquith Boys 1, Pennant Hills 2 Epping Boys 1, Galston 5 William Clarke College 1, Endeavour Sports 4 Kingsgrove 0, Aquinas College 3 Port Hacking 0, St Spyridon College 3 Sydney Grammar 1, DLS Caringbah 1 Lucas Heights 0, Sydney Tech 5 Blakehurst 2, Menai 4 Woolooware 0, Leumeah 4 Bass 2, Freeman Catholic 3 James Busby 0, Bossley Park 3 St Johns Park 2, East Hills Boys 4 Cabramatta 2.

GIRLS TROPHY

Round 1: St Spyridon College 1 Moriah College 0, Hunter Valley Grammar 8 Scone 0, CC Wallsend 6 Francis Greenway 0, St Francis Leeton 7 Coleambally Central 0, Hay 2 Balranald Central 0, Barham 2 Deniliquin 1.

Round 2: Riverstone 1 Doonside 0, Mitchell 3 Quakers Hill 0, The Forest 2 Davidson 1, William Clarke College 4 Castle Hill 2, Endeavour Sports 4 Cymea 0, Jannali 4 Moorefield Girls 1, St Spyridon College 0-3 JJ Cahill 0-1, Caringbah 1 Kirrawee 0, Bossley Park 3 Heritage College 0, Freeman Catholic 2 Ashcroft 0, Picnic Point 5 Condell Park 0, Miller 2 Bass 0, Trinity Lismore 2 Kadina 0, Lismore 1 Richmond River 0, Southern Cross 3 Emmanuel Anglican 2, Wollumbin 2 Tweed River 1, Murwillumbah 3 Kingscliffe 0, Woolgoolga 2 Bellingen 1, South Grafton 4 Catherine McAuley Grafton 0, Wauchope 3 St Clare Taree 0, GLC Forster 2 Wingham 0, St Josephs Pt Macquarie 3 Westport 1, Camden Haven 3 St Pauls Pt Macquarie 0, Kurri Kurri 3 Mount View 1, Maitland Grossman 0-4 St Catherines Singleton 0-2, Cessnock 3 St Peters Maitland 2, Hunter Valley Grammar 3 Scone Grammar 0, Merewether 2 Newcastle 1, Hunter Christian 4 Lambton 1, Kotara 2 St Phillips Christian 0, Hunter Sports 3 St Pius X 0, Northlakes 1 Berkeley Vale 0, Gosford 3 Erina 0, St Johns Dubbo 3 South Dubbo 0, Wade 5 Griffith Catholic 1, Griffith 8 Hillston Central 2, Barham 1 Hay 0, Bega 4 Narooma 2, Carroll College 0-2 Moruya 0-1, Monaro 3 Bowral 1.

WOLLONGONG NEWS

Famous Names in Illawarra Soccer

Local soccer competitions are attracting more well known soccer players from former NSL clubs and NSW State League.

An Australia wide name has last week attracted attention to ISA Premier League club Coniston Lions. Morgan Cawley (22) – son of Australian tennis queen former Wimbledon champion Evonne Goolagon-Cawley and current Australian women's national tennis coach – scored for his new club in his so far first two appearances. A striking tall player Morgan Cawley is biding his time staring in Wollongong soccer awaiting the chance to join a possible new club in Australian top league soccer.

He was born in the USA and moved to Australia age 10, played first grade in the Noosa league as a teenager, was a member of the Queensland Academy of sport and played for the Brisbane Strikers Youth grade. He then moved to Sydney Olympic youth team in 2000, broke into first grade at Olympic playing two seasons until a series of injuries – stress fracture back, serious groin injury, broken toe – forced a recovery period.

He returned to Sydney in 2004 and played with State league club Canterbury Marrickville and is determined now to make an impact in south coast soccer. Local fans will be curious to view the progress of this talented striker and no doubt Morgan is going to make an impression helping his new club to climb up the competition ladder. Coniston Lions are after 11 rounds on 16 points, just 3 points or one win out of the top three positions.

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Stuart Young

The Wolves striker and a favourite with locals, is set to join Wollongong Olympic next week, after competing his obligation with Sydney's Saint George. Olympic coach Gary Hatton is looking forward for Stuart to give his young players direction and stability.

The former Wolves star will certainly lift the fortunes of Olympic plus attract plenty of new curious spectators. He is a skilful marksman, good communicator, always available to spend time with fans and children when approached, a real crowd pleaser.

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Brendon Santalab

Former NSL player with Sydney United, brother of Michael, found now in Malaysia, has joined first division club South Coast United. Brendon has been sidelined for 3 month with an ankle injury and is training hard to regain fitness. His presence will be a terrific boost for South Coast playing next to established striker Denis Jurjevic and Olly Sekulovski thus making the side a firm contender for the top spot in first division, aiming for Premier League promotion.

Several youngsters have been promoted into first grade, doing well like Greg Valic a defender just 18, Mate Nimac (18), Anton Batur a striker just 17 years. The team is still adopting to the system of play introduced by new coach this year Jorge Alarcon, successful last season with Port Kembla.

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Jim Aschner

Striker from NSW State League club Bonnyrigg, rated in the recent Continental Tyres Cup final his team's best performer with a 4-star rating, has now joined Albion Park WE.

In his early 20's Jim looks sharp and would partner Jason Kencevski in attack according to club spokesman Frank Zammit. His signing comes at the right time with injuries taking out a number of key players. Goal keeper Jade Booth is still sidelined with a back injury and hamstring problems, hoping to return to training soon.

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE 2003-04

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PT
1.GreenGullyCavaliersSC	**15**	**9**	**3**	**3**	**25**	**15**	**30**
2.BulleenZebrasSC	14	9	3	2	21	11	30
3.PrestonLionsSC	15	9	2	4	21	11	29
4.FrankstonPinesSC	15	9	1	5	19	12	28
5.StAlbansSaintsSC	15	8	2	5	22	14	26
6.OakleighCannonsSC	15	8	2	5	19	14	26
7.Altona Magic	15	8	2	5	24	24	26
8.EssendonRoyalsSC	15	7	3	5	22	17	24
9.WhittleseaStallionsSC	15	2	4	9	23	28	10
10.KnoxCitySC	15	3	1	11	13	32	10
11.FawknerBluesSC	15	2	2	11	14	25	8
12.BentleighGreensSC	14	2	1	11	8	28	7

Round 16 Results -

Knox City . . . . . .3 (Veljovic 3) — Whittlesea Stallions . .0

Essendon Royals . .3 (Curcija 3) Bozinovski, Becvinovski) — Frankston Pines . . . . .2 (Elvin, Diaco)

Preston Lions . . . . .0 — Oakleigh Cannons . . .1 (Sulemani)

St Albans . . . . . .4 (Debevc, Antic, Milardovic, Urlovic) — Altona Magic . . . . . .2 (Delev, Opazo)

Green Gully . . . . . .3 (A Vargas, Fak, Tsaltas) — Fawkner Blues . . . . . .1 (Sterjovski)

Round 16 Fixtures

Fri, 4 June , 8.15PM

Oakleigh Cannons . . vs. Green Gully

Sun, 5 June, 3:00PM

Fawkner Blues . . . . . vs. Knox City

Frankston Pines . . . . vs. Altona Magic

Essendon Royals . . . vs. Bulleen Zebras

Bentleigh Greens . . . vs. Preston Lions

Mon, 7 June , 8.15PM

Whittlesea Stallions . vs. St Albans

Andy Vargas starred for Green Gully against the Fawkner Blues last week

SOCCERWOMAN BY JANENE MAR

WHO WILL JOIN THE YOUNG MATILDAS?

Australia's Qantas Young Matildas were the first to qualify for the FIFA U19 Women's World Championship when they won the Oceania U19 Qualifying Tournament in Port Moresby during April.

In what is a busy period right now with qualifiers, we catch up on who else is set to join them and host nation Thailand in the twelve-nation world championships set down for 10-27 November this year...

BRAZIL QUALIFIES FOR U19 WORLDS

Brazil are the next to have qualified for this year's FIFA U19 Women's World Championship when on Saturday the finals stage of the inaugural South American Women's U19 Qualifiers came to a conclusion in the Brazilian town of Agra Dos Reis.

Brazil now join Australia's Qantas Young Matildas as the two nations to have qualified so far, with host nation Thailand the other known entity.

CONMEBOL's Qualifiers were contested in two stages, nine nations split into three groups of three, each holding their separate but simultaneous mini tournaments earlier in May. Those to emerge group winners to join favourites Brazil in the finals stage were Paraguay, Bolivia, and Ecuador.

The four battled it out in round-robin format to claim the region's single berth to the 2004 FIFA U19 Women's World Championship.

No surprises from the first two days of play, with Brazil securing wins on both occasions, but they were also joined on six points by Paraguay. The two nations then clashed on the last day of action tomorrow in what turned out to be the deciding contest.

Before the crunch match, Brazil, long the clear leaders in the region, had notably conceded four goals, and had in fact been held to 2-2 at halftime against Bolivia.

Paraguay produced a similar performance against the Brazilians in the do-or-die match. With nothing to lose and so much at stake, it was Paraguay who took the game to Brazil, scoring the opening goal midway through the first half. Their joy was however short-lived as the home side levelled within three minutes, and then snatched the lead another three minutes on.

But Paraguay were not lying down, and put Brazil on notice again with an equaliser at 2-2 in stoppage time of the first half.

It was enough to give Brazil the wake-up call, dominating the second half. They were not rewarded however until the 84th minute to reclaim the lead at 3-2 before scoring another two in stoppage time for a final result of 5-2.

Ecuador claimed third place by defeating Bolivia 2-1.

Results

25 May	Paraguay 1 Bolivia 0	
25 May	Brazil 7 Ecuador 2	
27 May	Paraguay 2 Ecuador 0	
27 May	Brazil 4 Bolivia 2	
29 May	Ecuador 2 Bolivia 1	
29 May	Brazil 5 Paraguay 2	

CHINA BEATEN ON OPENING DAY

The 15-nation AFC U19 Women's Championship kicked off in China on Wednesday, the tournament's top two to advance to this year's FIFA U19 Women's World Championship along with host nation Thailand.

Home team China, desperate to restore order after missing out on the inaugural U19 World Championship in 2002, have already started with a setback, losing to South Korea on the opening day.

The two best teams from each group advance to the quarterfinals.

Results so far -

26 May	Vietnam 17 Malaysia 0	Gp A
26 May	Chinese Taipei 5 Singapore 0	Gp B
26 May	India 2 Hong Kong 1	Gp B
26 May	South Korea 2 China 1	Gp C
26 May	Philippines 3 Guam 0	Gp C
26 May	North Korea 19 Nepal 0	Gp D
26 May	Thailand 3 Uzbekistan 0	Gp D

AFRICAN U19s KICK OFF QUALIFIERS

The African U19 Women's Cup, qualifiers for the FIFA U19 Women's World Championship with one berth to Thailand 2004, has kicked off this week.

The Cup is played in three stages, the first round comprising six nations split into three pairings to play each other home and away. Three matches were scheduled to have been played this week, but results are available for only one –

Results so far -

22 May Morocco 1 Equatorial Guinea 1

NO SURPRISES IN CONCACAF

CONCACAF (North & Central America and the Caribbean region) proudly boast both the reigning world champions (USA) and the runners-up (Canada). Their CONCACAF U19 Women's Final Round Qualifiers produced no surprises on the opening two days play over the weekend in the Canadian host cities of Montreal and Ottawa.

USA, Canada, Mexico, and Costa Rica each came away with two wins from two in the 8-team, two-group finals tournament. The event concludes this Thursday, with the top two teams to qualify for Thailand 2004.

28 May
Mexico 5 Panama 1 Gp A
28 May
Canada 4 Jamaica 0 Gp A
30 May
Jamaica 2 Mexico 6 Gp A
30 May
Canada 7 Panama 0 Gp A
28 May
Costa Rica 4 Trinidad & Tobago 1 Gp B
28 May
Dominican Rep. 0 USA 14 Gp B
30 May
Costa Rica 11 Dominican Rep. 0 Gp B
30 May
USA 11 Trinidad & Tobago 1 Gp B

DRAW CONDUCTED FOR UEFA U19s FINALS

The draw for the eight-team finals tournament of the UEFA European Women's U19 Championship was held in Helsinki, Finland a fortnight ago. The tournament will decide Europe's four teams to compete in this year's FIFA U19 Women's World Championship.

Reigning European champions France and runners-up Norway have been drawn together in Group B of the event to be held in Finland, 28 July to 8 August 2004.

Group A : Finland, Germany, Spain, Switzerland.
Group B : Norway, France, Italy, Russia.

Farina's job safe

Australian SA chief John O'Neill has moved quickly to end speculation over the future of national coach Frank Farina.

There has been murmurings, dominated by the Sydney media, that Farina's job was under threat, but O'Neill told the Sunday Age:

"I have confirmed Frank Farina in his position. There was conjecture around that he may have not been secure in his job. He is secure in his job. I have adjusted his remuneration because a couple of years ago (when the previous Soccer Australia administration was virtually bankrupt) his pay was halved.

"Frank is confirmed . . . his contract has him there until the end of the World Cup campaign." O'Neill revealed that Australia's performance at the Athens Olympics will not have a bearing on Farina's senior coaching job.

He also confirmed the appointment of Ron Smith as Australia's new technical chief, which will be finalised in the near future.

from the

dressing sheds

by Mark Stavroulakis

Australian Soccer's Billion Dollar Club

BRW last week had an interesting article that caught the attention of many soccer followers in this country and believe it or not it was not a negative story as has been in the past in various media publications.

An alarming article written by John Stensholt wrote about how our Australian soccer game has been swamped by businessmen with an open cheque book.

How's this for a dream team as stated in the BRW.

Name	Wealth ($m)
Frank Lowy	4,200
Bruno Grollo	620
Con Makris	450
Ron Walker	405
John Ilhan	300
John Singleton	240
Spiros Stamoulis	239
Nick Politis	170
Nick Balagiannis	150
Phillip Wolanski	146

The ASA has been given a boost since the appointment of a Frank Lowy led board for a number of reasons.

Finance wise, his team surely has what it takes to market and promote the sport.

Lowy, owner of the Westfields group at 73 stands as Australia's second richest man.

With an estimated $4.2 billion dollars to his name, the new $22 billion entity through the Westfields Group, Lowy will be known as the world's biggest shopping centre owner and manager.

Born in Czechoslovakia, a former truck deliverer was summoned to become the possible messiah to the Australian soccer game.

So far, not much has been seen however the prospects of the game becoming huge have been quite scary to say the least.

Lowy will lead an eight-team competition next August that is set to revolutionize the sport.

Helping out Lowy will be a few good friends in John Singleton, Ron Walker and Phillip Wolanksi.

The executive director of Media Company STW Communications, Singleton's massive corporate connections in the sponsor world is something that the Australian soccer game will need and help the game to move forward.

Those who believe the advertising guru dislikes the game should take note at what he had said to BRW:

"It really makes all the other sports look a bit ridiculous. That is why we have attracted quality people like John O'Neill to the game now".

Ron Walker, currently heading the 2006 Commonwealth Games in Melbourne knows a lot about staging and putting on big events in this country.

Walker has been familiar in his role as being the main man behind the Formula One Grand Prix race in Melbourne.

Finally, property developer Phillip Wolanski will use his love of the game as a main point in bringing the sport together.

A former Northern Spirit director and team manager, Wolanski's role at ASA is to liaise between management and overseas players.

Following the ASA's board, the rest of the money making club all have a soccer story on their own.

John Ilhan is famous for being the owner and founder of mobile communications group 'Crazy Johns', that is currently the main sponsor for the Victorian Premier League.

Ilhan was also a former player of the game and starred for Sunshine George Cross back in the late 1980's.

Sydneysiders will be familiar with both Nick Politis and Nick Balagiannis.

Both men were part of a four-man syndicate with Sydney Olympic a few years back.

At this current stage though, the pair have made no intentions of returning back into the game after sustaining losses but do not be surprised if an interest is sparked once more.

Adelaide property developer Con Makris could be well given the name of a Roman Abramovic style director.

Having owned the now defunct Adelaide Sharks and now owning the Adelaide Galaxy in the South Australian Premier League, Makris' love for the game has been shown in more ways than one.

Only recently, Markis turned down the offer of helping South Melbourne through its financial difficulties after it was discovered that the club would not take part in the NSL next year.

Spiros Stamoulis, a name synonymous to many of the Melbourne Greek community would know that this man lives and breathes South Melbourne.

A property investor and a former soft drink manufacturer, Stamoulis owns the Melbourne Greek paper 'Ta Nea' and also the 3XY radio station.

Finally, retired property developer Bruno Grollo did have a stint in the Australian soccer scene some years back.

During the mid 1990's, Grollo was the main investor in Victorian Premier League side Bulleen's push towards a hopeful NSL spot.

The bid failed thus pushing Grollo out of the game but the love for it has still been there.

There you have it, a comprehensive look at some of the big money spenders that have had a strong association with soccer in this country.

One must say that the extensive list of high profile businessmen should worry other sports quite a bit.

Let's hope that a new era on the promotion of the game is seen with these new men listed above.

Turkish Fans swamp venues

If I did not know better I would have thought that we were in Turkey after watching both the Socceroo matches against Turkey in Sydney and Melbourne.

Turkish fans were out in numbers and watched their stars take out both games and the trophy.

28,326 fans turned up in Sydney while 28,953 went to Melbourne amidst claims tickets were far too overpriced – which was the likely case for many who did not watch the game.

Out of both sets of crowds, the Turkish contingent stood out chanting their nation to victory but who would not have come to watch the likes of Emre, Suker, Rustu, Nihat Live?

Nevertheless a good show was put on by both sides but more internationals such as this must be warranted.

Could you imagine how full a stadium in Sydney and Melbourne would be if the likes of England, France, Brazil, Italy or Greece venture to our shores?

Turkish fans were treated to a smorgasbord of stars from their nation.

Full strength squads from these nations would spurn a full house in as many hours.

One aspect though ASA CEO John O'Neill must look at is the pricing situation. Many families were left upset at the prices that were put through by ASA, hopefully lessons were learnt from these two matches against the Turks.

Bravo to Turkey for putting on a brave face and not just coming her for the sake of it like so many nations have done in the past.

Have your say with the ASA

With football in Australia undergoing its greatest (and most ambitious) metamorphosis to date, it's no surprise that the Australian Soccer Association is leading the charge.

Check out and complete the survey at www.australiansoccer.com.au/public/addSurvey.asp and let them know your preferred name for the new governing body, the new national league, and a possible new name for the Senior Men's National Team, currently known as the Socceroos.

The Crawford Report did recommend a future mindset to refer to 'soccer' as its correct name of 'football', and these steps could see the recommendation become reality.

Steve Darby wowing Singapore

Former Sydney Olympic Assistant-Coach Steve Darby has been in great form coaching his Singapore side Home United this season.

After winning the double in the Singapore League last year, Darby's Home United continue to impress this season currently standing in second spot.

One major achievement the club has managed to do was beating the champions of Malaysia, Hong Kong and the Maldives in reaching through the next stage of the AFC Cup.

Syria or Lebanon has been the likely destination that Home United will venture towards in going further into the tournament.

Darby has also indulged into another sector in football – a commentator on television.

"I'm doing a fair bit of TV work for ESPN in Singapore. The audiences aren't that bad, 500,000,000 people for an Arsenal v Liverpool match. We air in China and India as well on exclusive rights so that only makes it more popular".

ABSW will endeavour to cover a full story on Darby's success in Singapore in forthcoming editions – let's just say 'Darbs' is lapping it up in Asia, well done Steve.

Aussie West Ham fan sticks it to TV networks

A mad Aussie West Ham fan has won the rights for the club's big promotion playoff match against Crystal Palace that was played last weekend.

David Lewis showed up local TV networks by securing the rights from Setanta after learning that no station was going to telecast the crunch game.

Thanks to Lewis' efforts, the match can now be seen in Australia in six pubs and clubs around Australia.

"I said I'd underwrite the whole thing and I'll put it on around the country," Lewis told the Courier Mail.

"Setanta said they'd never done it before like this - a football fan buying the exclusive rights to the broadcast of a match from 24,000km away. To their credit, they went out on a limb to support what's become a people power thing. "I've had an enormous number of e-mails from around the world since my getting the rights was put on the West Ham website last Friday.

"I even had a marriage proposal from the UK. She was so impressed that someone would go to that trouble. I didn't reply - I didn't think my wife would be too happy."

Mr ABSW in Melbourne

Yours truly had the task of venturing off to Melbourne for the first time and had a blast on the three day tour in Victoria.

Known for its cosmopolitan lifestyle via its fashion, restaurants and its unique European flavour of décor, Melbourne sure knows how to party.

It was quite good to see how popular the round ball game was received there with a number of fanatical soccer supporters promoting the sport in more ways than one.

Many fans, being of South Melbourne and Melbourne Knights that I caught up with stated their dissatisfaction with the current state of their clubs but knew that there was light at the end of the tunnel next year when both clubs look set to compete in the Victorian Premier League.

One certain taxi driver who will be known as Mr T vented his anger though towards various ethnic clubs and believed that Frank Lowy is doing the right thing in getting the axe on all clubs bearing any heritage from an overseas coverage.

Special thanks goes out to Victorian correspondent Daniela Raco who took the time in showing Mr *ABSW* and his friends the sights and sounds of Melbourne's night life – Did I mention Paris Hilton was at one of the bars?

Former Gunner believes in European Roo base

By Joe Russo

Former England Youth International and Arsenal Reserve goalkeeper, Ron Tilsed, believes that the Australian Socceroos need a coach with international experience and a permanent European base such as London.

Speaking on Sunday Night Soccer on radio 98.5 FM (every Sunday in NSW at 10.00pm) Tilsed, one of the characters in the early days of the Philips NSL, said that the Socceroos need to be on the park more often.

"We've got to get the national team on the park more often and playing games like the England game," he said. "The national team needs to be based in Europe with a European successful coach.

"Somebody who is, with no disrespect to Frank Farina, a little bit more qualified and who has been around the European market managing clubs, especially since we now have over 200 Australian players in Europe in various competitions."

Tilsed, who was capped 15 times for England's Youth Team and went on to earn a contract at Arsenal, is well aware of the challenges that Australian players face in Europe.

The former Canberra City goalkeeper believes that Australia should have a B team with locally based players making up that squad. The idea is not new and in fact in the early 1980s an Australia B team was very much part of the national set up.

"Australia should have a B squad of Australian based players, probably managed by Farina," Tilsed told listeners. "This team should filter players into the European based [A] squad which should be the pinnacle.

"The national team needs to be playing more regularly against teams such as Germany, England, Brazil and Argentina. When we start beating these teams, then the whole world will look up and the game will lift over here too," he said.

"Let's not forget that we still have to come back here and qualify for the World Cup and play the likes of New Zealand and Fiji."

Tilsed also has some revolutionary ideas on the domestic front. As one of the first ever imports into the NSL, he was twice at the forefront in new domestic competitions. Not only in Australia but in South Africa too.

Tilsed played in the very first ever NSL match in 1977 for Canberra City and formed a life-long friendship with then coach Johnny Warren.

"I have a great friendship with Johnny Warren. I met him in January 1977 as I was the first player that Canberra City brought over," he said. "I sent my resumes over and I got this contract back in the mail from Johnny. I accepted it even though I didn't know where I was going.

"I was going to Canberra City, the club that was to represent the national capital in the newly formed NSL in 1977. With a then population of about 200,000, it was a real eye opener.

"When I got there we had nothing. It was Johnny and I with no ground, no footballs and no sponsor. However, the crowning point was the Marconi game in 1978 when there was 10,000 people in the Bruce Stadium."

Tilsed fondly remembers one of his early encounters with Warren and another 1974 Socceroo, Adrian 'Noddy' Alston. It was a road trip to Griffiths in 1977 to conduct some coaching clinics and for Warren to autograph some books.

"I was just off the plane and Johnny had brought over his great friend Adrian Alston," he said. "Adrian was playing for Tampa Bay Rowdies in the North American soccer league and we got on like a house on fire. We both had similar backgrounds, having played in the UK and now we were playing for Canberra City.

"Johnny said to us I have to do a book signing and coaching clinic down in Griffiths, so we volunteered to go along and give him a hand.

"We had all heard about Johnny and knew that he was big. However, when we got down to Griffiths, there were some 250 media people. I just looked at Noddy and said 'you've got to be joking? All this for Johnny Warren?'

Tilsed would like to see the new national soccer league form closer ties with European soccer and especially some of the bigger clubs. Furthermore, he believes that training camps in conjunction with these clubs need to instigated.

"The new clubs should be franchised out and half owned by one of the major forces throughout the world. For instance Sydney could have an affiliation with say Arsenal or Man Utd, Melbourne to perhaps Real Madrid, Adelaide to a Brazilian club and so forth," Tilsed suggested to listeners.

"We should have the world covered and there should be training camps for players to backward and forward between these clubs, where the game is played at the highest level."

Tilsed is confident about the success of the new national league and sees similarities to his days in South Africa in the 1970s. He also believes that links to Asia should be developed.

"I like the way we are going to have a true national league. It is similar to when I arrived in South Africa where they had one club in Johannesburg, one in Capetown, one in Durban, one in Pretoria and it was very successful.

"I believe the clubs, one each in Sydney, Melbourne etc will attract the finest players in Australia and some good players throughout the world because it will be an incredible standard.

"We have already seen the success in Perth, we saw it in Newcastle when Newcastle KB first started and I was amongst the success of Canberra. At the end of the domestic competition the best club should play the best sides in Asia, perhaps in China or Japan.

"The first thing that we've got to get right is that the game needs to be recognised at a national level. Quite simply it hasn't been for several years. However, the most important thing remains qualifying for the World Cup."

It would be impossible not to ask Tilsed about the great success of Arsenal this season, given that in 1971 he was their reserve goalkeeper to Bobby Wilson.

"They have never lost what the whole of Arsenal epitomises – complete professionalism, will to win and not to take second best," he proudly told listeners.

"It is one of the greatest honours of my life to have signed with Arsenal. I still treasure my Arsenal contract, along with my England caps, and I have it framed. I am delighted for Arsenal."

Tilsed played in an era when football had some real characters and some amazing friendships were formed.

Former English and Arsenal youth keeper Ron Tilsed in action with Canberra City back in '77.

This journey man of football was capped 15 times for England's Youth Team, played in the Little World in Czechoslovakia at the age of 17, won that Little World Cup with England beating Portugal in the final and was voted Player of the Tournament.

His roommate on that occasion was none other than the great Trevor Francis. Steve Daley, the first million pound player, was also part of that England Youth Team.

When he couldn't break into the first team at Arsenal because the great Bobby Wilson was in his way, he joined Portsmouth, then a Division Two club. Tilsed was to end his playing days in Australia where he has basically remained ever since.

"I don't regret anything that I have done in the past. Financially we all wish we were playing today. If I were reserve goalkeeper for Arsenal today [instead of then], I would probably earn at least 50,000 pounds a week and wouldn't have to worry about going to work tomorrow".

Sunday Night Soccer airs weekly at 10.00pm every Sunday on radio 98.5 FM in NSW.

Mandic: No Confederations Cup for Kewell

By Mark Van Aken

I know, I know. The body of this column is starting to sound like a broken record but bear with me please.

Harry Kewell's Manager Bernie Mandic has come out in the media and announced that H won't play at next years Confederations Cup.

He says it's a 'Sham Cup'. Simply a money-spinner for a dollar hungry FIFA. Descriptions that I'm sure many in Yorkshire may in fact reserve for he and his high profile client. Mandic has now laid down the most impossible of ground rules for Frank Farina when considering Harry for Socceroos selection.

For those who've joined us late, let's re-cap. Kewell will not be available for games in Australia that are not World Cup Qualifiers. i.e. Harry will play one, perhaps two games every 4 years in Australia. Harry will not travel anywhere on earth, save for London to play in a non-World Cup Qualifier match. And now it seems he wont play in the second biggest global tournament because it clashes with his trip to the Bahamas.

Australia suffers from not playing together enough. Considering our breadth of talent it is offered by most as the single reason why we have haven't qualified for 7 consecutive World Cups. What part of this doesn't Harry understand? His failure to grasp the notion that he needs to play more than 180 minutes with the likes of Bresciano, Grella, Moore etc for this team to actually succeed means the Socceroos are on a hiding to nothing come late next year.

However the plot thickens still. Mandic says that while Harry wont play in Germany's mini World Cup next year where Australia will play several games against the cream of world football including Brazil, Germany and Holland (who will qualify as Euro winners, ha ha). Despite this he says he will however play in the qualifiers for this tournament later in the year. Hold the phone Blocker; let's get this right. You can't play in a tournament because it's not important but you can play in the qualifiers for that unimportant tournament, Bernie –clarification please.

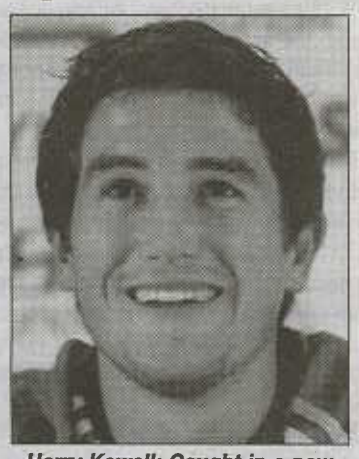
These qualifiers will be played down under during an extended UEFA World Cup period later in the year. Mandic says Kewell will be here, I'll bet money he won't.

If the series against Turkey taught us anything it's that Socceroos must play together in order to become a team. A 3-1 hiding on Friday night in Sydney was 72 hours later transformed into an unlucky 1-0 result in Melbourne.

Farina got some positives from the games. Bresciano again showed that he is a star on the rise. Grella, while not setting the world on fire, finally got some game time in the green; or should I say teal; and gold. Max Vieri made his debut and while he would appear to be behind Viduka, Aloisi, Agostino and H, he showed he could be called on in the future.

There were others perhaps showed that their days in the national team are over. No names here, they know who they are. If Farina was wondering whether Patty Kisnorbo could make the step into top line international football, he's now none the wiser.

The gaffer will regain the services of Aloisi and Agostino for the Oceania Series. He too will have Tim Cahill at his disposal. The Milwall dynamo will no doubt thrive out of the pressure cooker



Harry Kewell: Caught in a new saga whether or not he will take part in next year's Confederations Cup held in Germany

environment he faced against a rampaging Man U in last weeks FA Cup Final. The Hindmarsh Stadium while magnificent for what it is, isn't Millennium Stadium against the Old Trafford lads on English football's biggest day.

A conclusion to the Harry issue is surely drawing near. Australian soccer lost one Liverpool star two decades ago to the Reds, it is seeming like a large dose of de ja vu.

His inability and now refusal to play with the side consistently surely makes us all examine the effect this has on the rest of the team. Run over that word again, team. The sum of the team must over ride its individuals, even when they are magicians with the ball.

Harry is a special talent but his commitment, once questionable, is now seemingly non-existent. Farina, or any national coach for that matter, cannot succeed when his players are dictating which games they will and won't play.

The Lions — 2003 Champions of Queensland
133 Pine Road, Richlands. QLD
Phone: (07) 3271 3636 ● Fax: (07) 3271 3804

QLD Premier League Round 12

By Glenn Davis

Palm Beach moved back into the Brisbane premier league top four with a hard fought 2-1 win over Mitchelton at Broadbeach on Saturday night.

The Gold Coast side's victory ended a three match winless streak after two draw and one loss against the bottom placed sides.

Palm Beach coach Karl Herdle was relieved his side finally found form in the first match of the second round.

Mitchelton looked on the road to end its four match losing streak when striker Jason Podgi put the visitors ahead 1-nil after only ten minutes.

However, Palm Beach hit back with two superb goals to go to the break with a 2-1 lead.

Jed Wright equalised for Palm Bach snapping a shot home in a goal mouth scramble before Daniel Fung put his side ahead ten minutes from the interval with a 20 metre cracker.

"We dominated the first half and I can't recall Mitchelton having one shot on goal in the first period," Herdle said.

"We had a fair few more chances to score but they couldn't find the net."

Herdle had threatened mass sackings to end a form slump, but the changes he did make were for the better.

"We've had a lot of players out injured for the past few weeks and this was the first time I've been able to field my full strength team in a month."

Herdle was delighted with the three points and to be back into semi-final contention.

"We had to work hard in the second half," Herdle said.

"Because we have been losing I think the boys panicked a little when we led at the break and we lost our midfield."

Mitchelton coach Greg Brown believes his side deserved a draw.

"It was a strange game. They put us under a lot of pressure in the first half but we fought back and dominated them after the break," Brown said.

"We just couldn't score but in a game of two halves I thought a draw would have been a fitting result.

"We're going through a barren spell and have lost our last four games now.

"It's quite frustrating."

While Palm Beach was back in the top four, Taringa and North Star put up to six teams in the mix for relegation with upset results.

Taringa downed Souths 2-1 while North Star beat Wynnum 3-nil.

Taringa were at the foot of the table before the game before collecting only its second win of the season on the back of two second half goals.

Taringa was down 1-nil after conceding a 50th minute goal before their leading scorer Reza Aysen equalised in the 70th minute finishing off a cross with an easy tap in.

Youngster Andrew Imrie got the second to collect a valuable three points for Taringa five minutes from the end by bending a free kick around a wall.

"It was a nervous last five minutes," said Taringa coach Allan Waller.

"We're not out of the relegation woods yet but importantly we've put a lot of other teams under pressure.

"Had we lost we would have been three points adrift and in big trouble but now four to six teams are within a few points of each other.

"Between four and six teams now have to look over their shoulders at relegation."

The Queensland Lions juggernaut rolled on at the top of the table beating Pine Rivers 4-2 at Wendy Alison Park.

Lions led 1-nil at the interval after a long range shot from Jonty Richter took a deflection into the net.

Pine Rovers defender Ken Hurford also struck a long range shot to equalise after the break before Lions went ahead 2-1 through Terry Hughes.

Royce Brownlie put Lions ahead 3-1 but Pine Rivers fought back to reduce the lead midway through the second half when substitute Darren Bender headed home

The final goal came in the dying minutes from Dwayne Richardson for Lions.

Lions' coach Miron Bleiberg conceded his side was tested and put under a lot of pressure during the match.

"Pine Rivers are a formidable side," Bleiberg said.

"We had our backs to the wall in the first 25 minutes and were under quite a deal of pressure.

"But it's a credit to our side that they survived and then it was the same old story when we got back on top."

Pine Rivers coach Clayton Koch believed his side played well but was beaten on the night by the bounce of the ball.

"It was one of those nights," Koch said.

"We played well and were a bit unlucky but Lions are dangerous all the time.

"We completely dominated them in the first 25 minutes and should have been up 1-nil had we taken our chances.

"I was wrapped the way we were playing but had to play catch up football after they scored first.

"When you play Lions you have to score first to have a chance.

"We got back to 2-1 and began to play one on one at the back and we came back again to 3-2.

"In the end we were pushing forward looking for the equaliser when they got us on the break in the final few minutes."

Rochedale Rovers maintained second spot on the table downing Toowoomba 2-nil at home.

After a scoreless first half, Rochedale's Nick Maas broke the deadlock in the 75th minute running in behind the defence to slot home from inside the box.

Rochedale dominated the visitors for most of the match but with only a slim lead a draw was always on the cards against the lowly placed Toowoomba.

Rochedale's never say side attitude prevailed when Grant Marshall headed home a Maas cross from the left on fulltime.

"We had a lot more possession than Toowoomba and we were the only side that looked like winning," said Rochedale coach Keiran Cooper.

"Toowoomba defended a lot and put most of their players behind the ball all the time trying to catch us out on the break."

Brisbane City moved back into fifth spot and ensured Easts would be looking over its shoulder in the relegation battle with a comfortable 4-2 home win at Spencer Park.

Easts led 1-nil at the break but may have troubled City in the second half if they had put away earlier chances.

"It was a game of two halves and we should have gone to the break with a bigger lead," said Easts coach Col Bennett.

Bennett conceded he was no longer focused on a semi final position with a swag of clubs now worrying about relegation.

"Playing away from home I was quite happy to lead at half time but they got two quick goals inside the first six minutes of the second half," he said.

"It was disappointing and there's a bit of disharmony creeping into the side which we need to stamp out.

"We've lost three of our last four games now and the only point we got was against Souths.

"We have a tough game against Pine Rivers next week who hadn't lost until this weekend when we took points off them in the first round.

"We're looking over our shoulders for sure now, rather than aim for the semis."

Brisbane City's goals came from Wayne Strange, Mark Battistin and a double from Pablo Avilles.

City coach Frank Pimblett was delighted with the result after a dismal first half performance.

"We played poorly in the first half but scored two goals in six minutes," Pimblett said.

"We took it to them after the break and took better options."

Brisbane City's win was its fourth victory from its past five games but the road to the finals may be tough with the side losing three players for the remainder of the season.

Strange leaves this week for England as does squad member Alan Hollywell while Keith Miller is Scotland bound.

"We've got the Queensland Cup next week then we have a good run for a few weeks," he said.

Results & Tables

Premier League

Rochedale Rovers 2 (Maas, Marshall) v Toowoomba Raiders 0
Half-time 0-0

Souths United 1 (Woodruffe) **v Taringa Rovers 2** (Aysen, Imrie)
Half-time 0-0

Brisbane Wolves 0 v North Star 3 (McLaren, Butters 2)
Half-time 0-1

Palm Beach Sharks 2 (Wright, Fung) v **Mitchelton 1** (Poggi)
Half-time 2-1

Pine Rivers 2 (Bender, Hurford) v **Queensland Lions 4** (Richter, Hughes, R Brownlie, Richardson)
Half-time 0-1

Brisbane City 4 (Avilles 2, Strange, Battistin) v **Eastern Suburbs 1** (Klein)
Half-time 0-1

	P	W	L	D	For	Ag	Pts
Queensland Lions	12	12	0	0	49	6	36
Rochedale Rovers	12	8	2	2	29	16	26
Pine Rivers	12	7	3	2	24	27	23
Palm Beach	12	5	3	4	25	17	19
Brisbane City	12	6	5	1	21	21	19
Mitchelton	11	5	4	2	20	15	17
Brisbane Wolves	11	4	6	1	19	27	13
Eastern Suburbs	12	3	7	2	16	25	11
North Star	12	3	7	2	13	22	11
Taringa Rovers	12	2	8	2	20	30	8
Souths United	12	2	8	2	14	27	8
Toowoomba Raiders	10	2	6	2	8	25	8

Premier Reserves

Rochedale Rovers 4 Toowoomba Raiders 2, Souths United 4 Taringa Rovers 2, Brisbane Wolves 2 North Star 1, Palm Beach Sharks 4 Mitchelton 3, Pine Rivers 1 Queensland Lions 5, Brisbane City 2 Eastern Suburbs 0

Premier Youth

Souths United 2 Taringa Rovers 0

Division 1

Beenleigh 4 The Gap 3, Ipswich Knights 1 Brisbane Olympic 2, Redlands 4 Rocklea 1, Southside Eagles 3 Mt Gravatt 0, Albany Creek 3 Capalaba 3, Uni of Qld 2 Peninsula Power 2

	P	W	L	D	For	Ag	Pts
Brisbane Olympic	12	10	1	1	20	4	31
Peninsula Power	12	8	1	3	28	11	27
Uni of Qld	12	6	1	5	31	16	23
Southside Eagles	12	6	4	2	20	15	20
Mt Gravatt	12	6	5	1	21	17	19
Beenleigh	12	5	4	3	22	20	18
Redlands United	12	5	5	2	25	20	17
Ipswich Knights	12	5	6	1	16	15	16
Albany Creek	12	2	8	2	20	28	8
The Gap	12	1	6	5	18	27	8
Rocklea United	12	2	8	2	9	31	8
Capalaba	12	1	8	3	10	36	6

Division 1 Reserves

Beenleigh 1 The Gap 2, Ipswich Knights 2 Brisbane Olympic 2, Redlands 1 Rocklea 0, Southside Eagles 0 Mt Gravatt 4, Albany Creek 2 Capalaba 0, Uni of Qld 2 Peninsula Power 0

Division 1 Youth

Beenleigh 3 The Gap 1, Ipswich Knights 3 Brisbane Olympic 7, Redlands 4 Rocklea 0, Southside Eagles 3 Mt Gravatt 6, Albany Creek 3 Capalaba 1

Division 2

Moggill United 1 Newmarket 3, Goodna 5 Slacks Creek 0, Annerley 1 Samford 0, North Pine 0 Ipswich City 3, Brisbane Force 2 Bethania 2, Oxley 1 Grange Thistle 2

Division 2 Reserves

Moggill United 0 Newmarket 3, Goodna 4 Slacks Creek 0, Annerley 4 Samford 1, North Pine 0 Ipswich City 3, Brisbane Force 1 Bethania 0, Oxley 0 Grange Thistle 5

Metro 1

Pineapple Rovers 2 Brisbane Wolves 1, Darra Lions 4 Souths United 2, Clairvaux 2 Wilston 1, Bayside 1 Taringa Rovers 3, Uni of Qld 1 Acacia Ridge 1, Park Ridge 3 Mitcheiton 0

Metro 2

Ridge Hills 0 Redcliffe PCYC 1, Logan City Kings 10 Mooroondu 1, The Gap 5 Newmarket 1, Pine Rivers 0 Brighton 1, Brisbane Toro 4 Pine Hills 1

Metro 3

Pineapple Rovers 1 Pine Hills 0, Eastern Suburbs 17 North Pine1, Darra Lions 2 Souths United 1, Clairvaux 5 Grange Thistle 2, Bayside 1 Newmarket 1, Uni of Qld 1 Acacia Ridge 0

Metro 4

Beenleigh 1 Regents Park 9, Newmarket 1 Acacia Ridge 3, Southside Eagles 1 The Gap 1, Old Bridge 7 Mt Gravatt 0, Brisbane City v Brisbane Force (not available), Slacks Creek 1 Taringa Rovers 2

Metro 5

Brighton 6 Brisbane Olympic 3, Ridge Hills 2 Ipswich City 2, Eastern Suburbs 0 Redlands 4, Clairvaux 0 Albany Creek 1, Annerley 2 Newmarket 4, Slacks Creek 2 North Star 2

Metro 6

Brisbane Wolves 2 Goodna 3, Camira 3 Mooroondu 2, Mt Gravatt 0 Park Ridge 1, Albany Creek 7 Regents Park 1

Open Youth

Rochedale Rovers Bethania (match postponed due to light failure), Souths United 5 Toowoomba 0, North Pine 2 Brisbane Force 11

ITALIAN

SHEVCHENKO SECURES FUTURE

AC Milan's Ukrainian striker Andriy Shevchenko, top scorer in Serie A last season, has signed a new deal with the Italian champions which ties him to the club until at least 2009.

Milan said Shevchenko, whose current contract was due to run out in July 2005, had signed a four-year extension to his deal.

"This contract is really important for me," Shevchenko told the club's official website, www.acmilan.it.

Andriy Shevchenko: Signed a four-year contract extension with AC Milan.

"I am very happy to remain here and end my career at Milan."

The 27-year-old, who finished as Serie A's highest goalscorer this season with 24 goals, is looking forward to writing another successful chapter with the Italian giants.

"I have already spent five years here and they have been wonderful, now with other motivations a new five-year experience begins," said the ex-Dinamo Kiev star.

SENSINI STAYS PUT

Udinese's veteran Argentinean defender Nestor Sensini has signed a two-year contract extension with the northern Italian club.

The new deal expires in 2006 and, if he sees it out, will be he will be 39 by the time he finishes with Udinese - the club that bought him from Newell's Old Boys back in 1989.

He has since played for Parma and Lazio before returning to Udine in 2002.

Sensini played in the 1990 World Cup final for Argentina.

Nestor Sensini: The 37-year-old will remain with Udinese for a further two years.

Jaap Stam: Will not longer play ffor Holland after the Euro 2004 championships in Portugal.

STAM SELECTS AC OVER COUNTRY

Italian champions AC Milan's new signing Jaap Stam is to retire from international football after the Euro 2004 championships in Portugal.

The former Manchester United and Lazio central defender, who turns 32 in July, said he wanted to devote himself to his new club, who he signed for earlier this month.

Stam, who made his name at PSV Eindhoven before securing an 11million pounds move to United in 1998, has been capped 59 times - scoring three times - since making his debut in April 1996 against old rivals Germany.

He was an integral part of the Dutch side which reached both the 1998 World Cup and Euro 2000 semi-finals where they went out on penalties on both occasions to Brazil and Italy respectively.

The Dutch are in Group D, the so-called group of death, with Germany - who they open their campaign against - impressive qualifiers the Czech Republic and debutants Latvia.

VIERI COY ABOUT ITALIAN SUCCESS

Christian Vieri has played down Italy's chances of success at this summer's European Championships.

The Inter Milan striker will be relied upon to score the goals that will fire the Azzurri to their first international title for 22 years, but he was strangely downbeat about the Italians' prospects.

"There are a number of very strong teams that will battle it out for the trophy, and I believe we are one of those sides," he told Italian newspaper La Gazzetta dello Sport.

"But it will be very, very difficult to achieve our objective.

"France are a great team, while the Czech Republic, Portugal, England, Spain and Germany will also be dangerous."

Vieri is one of six forwards named in Giovanni Trapattoni's squad, who face Denmark, Bulgaria and Sweden in Group C. Francesco Totti, Alessandro Del Piero, Antonio Cassano, Bernardo Corradi and Marco Di Vaio have also been selected, but there is no place for Vieri's close friend Filippo Inzaghi.

The AC Milan forward netted six times in the qualifiers but has struggled with ankle problems all season and Trapattoni has opted not to take a risk on his fitness.

However he believes his partnership with Francesco Totti will be the best on show at Euro 2004.

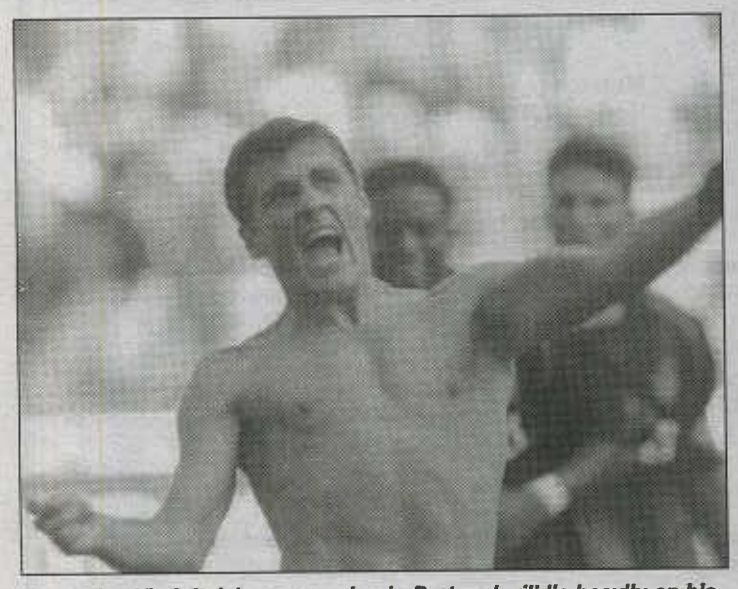
"Totti and I are the best there are."

There will be a lot of great strike pairings in this competition but I rate Totti-Vieri more than the others," said the Inter forward.

"I like the French, Dutch and Spanish forward lines but I rate ours even more highly," he added.

Totti and Vieri's appearances together in the past two years have been limited due to injuries but when they have lined up alongside each other, such as in the qualifier against Finland last year, they have swiftly struck up a good understanding.

"I have a special relationship with Francesco and we don't have the need to train together to understand each other. It is enough to look at those few times we have played together for the national side," said Vieri.



Christian Vieri: Italy's progression in Portugal will lie heavily on his shoulders.

Squad numbers for Euro 2004

Keepers: 1-Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus), 12-Francesco Toldo (Inter Milan), 22-Angelo Peruzzi (Lazio).

Defenders: 2-Christian Panucci (AS Roma), 5-Fabio Cannavaro (Inter Milan), 13-Alessandro Nesta (AC Milan), 19-Gianluca Zambrotta (Juventus), 3-Massimo Oddo (Lazio), 6-Matteo Ferrari (Parma), 23-Marco Materazzi (Inter Milan), 15-Giuseppe Favalli (Lazio).

Midfielders: 21-Andrea Pirlo (AC Milan), 4-Cristiano Zanetti (Inter Milan), 20-Simone Perrotta (Chievo Verona), 8-Gennaro Gattuso (AC Milan), 14-Stefano Fiore (Lazio), 16-Mauro Camoranesi (Juventus).

Strikers: 10-Francesco Totti (AS Roma), 18-Antonio Cassano (AS Roma), 9-Christian Vieri (Inter Milan), 11-Bernardo Corradi (Lazio), 17-Marco Di Vaio (Juventus), 7- Alessandro Del Piero (Juventus).

KAPO CAPTIVATES JUVENTUS

Juventus have indicated their determination to right the wrongs of the season past by making their second signing of a nascent close-season, bringing in Olivier Kapo from Auxerre.

The French international, who failed to make France's final 23 for Euro 2004, joins compatriot Jonathan Zebina, who joined on a free transfer from Roma, in Turin.

"I cannot wait for my Juventus adventure to begin," Kapo told the club's official website, www.juventus.it.

"This is the most important club in the world."

Kapo, 23, made 118 league appearances in five seasons with the Burgundy club.

Kapo and Zebina might be joined by another Frenchman shortly.

Monaco coach Didier Deschamps is the strong favourite to take over as coach following the departure of Marcello Lippi at the end of a season which Juve finished empty-handed.

MEANWHILE former Italy midfielder Antonio Conte has left the club after 13 seasons with the Turin-based club.

The 34-year-old told Italian news agency ANSA that he had turned down a new offer with the Turin side.

Conte, who has suffered a series of injuries in the past four seasons, said the offer he had received from Juve was "inadequate" but added that "maybe it was the right decision because we have reached the end of a cycle".

Olivier Kapo: Moving from Auxerre to Turin.

The midfielder, who joined Juventus from Lecce in November 1991 and made 20 appearances for Italy, said he was not sure if he would continue his playing career.

"I haven't decided whether to give up playing or not because I am a little confused about my future. It is certain though that either this year or the next I want to start my career as a coach," he said.

ENGLISH

ANFIELD DEALS ALL BUT THAI-D UP

Liverpool has confirmed France striker Djibril Cisse will join the club from AJ Auxerre, despite the sacking of manager Gerard Houllier.

"I don't think you could have taken the decision not to sign Cisse just because we have parted company with Gerard," Liverpool chief executive Rick Parry was quoted as saying on the club's official website.

Houllier secured Cisse's agreement to join Liverpool with a scheduled arrival of July 1, but was sacked after six years in the Anfield job.

British media have put Cisse's transfer fee at about 14 million pounds.

Liverpool scraped into the Champions League third qualifying round after finishing fourth in the premier league at the end of a season the club had begun with far greater ambitions.

Cisse, top scorer in French Ligue 1, is seen as a prize capture, with Parry adding: "He (Cisse) has pace and power and all the qualities a modern striker needs. He is someone who we believe is capable of scoring 20 goals a season."

MEANWHILE the Anfield club has reached an agreement to sell a 30 percent stake and two seats on its board to Thailand for $US115 million.

Liverpool, which hasn't won the English Premier League since 1990, sorely needs the cash to buy new players and build a bigger stadium.

Only due diligence needs to be completed by both sides to seal the deal, Deputy Commerce Minister Pongsak Raktapongpaisarn said after returning from meetings in England with representatives of Liverpool.

"We can say that the chance to buy is more than 90 percent," Pongsak said. A memorandum of understanding -- one step short of the final deal -- would be signed in July before the new Premier League season begins in August, he said.

The deal is the brainchild of Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, a billionaire tycoon turned politician who had long nurtured an ambition to acquire an English Premier League team.

He originally planned to purchase the stake with his own money. But the plan now is to raise money through a state lottery.

Djibril Cisse is heading to Anfield despite Houllier's dismissal.

JUNINHO SAFE AT BORO

Middlesbrough have quashed rumours that they will consider selling Juninho to help to fund their summer spending programme.

Boro boss Steve McClaren is eager to buttress his squad for next term, particularly with a debut European campaign to consider.

Attack is McClaren's priority and he has been linked with bids for Patrick Kluivert and Mark Viduka, while he missed out on England international Alan Smith.

His determination to add extra strength to his front line sparked suggestions that Brazilian dynamo Juninho would be forced out of The Riverside.

But Boro have dismissed any notion that the 31-year-old will be pushed out of the club to accommodate fresh faces.

Juninho: The Brazilian international will remain at The Riverside.

"Nobody has told Juninho he might not be selected," said the club's chief executive Keith Lamb.

"Juninho is under contract at Boro and there he will remain.

"If someone offers us £30 million for Juninho, then obviously we will consider it but we have had no offers for him."

Out-and-out strikers already on Teesside are the ones under pressure with the likes of Szilard Nemeth and Michael Ricketts fighting for their futures.

SMITH SETTLES AT OLD TRAFFORD

England striker Alan Smith completed his move to Manchester United from Leeds United in a deal worth 7.05 million pounds.

The 23-year-old signed a five-year contract to become the Old Trafford club's first signing since the end of a disappointing season.

"I have never been more impressed with a young player, his desire to play for Manchester United is fantastic," United manager Alex Ferguson said in a statement.

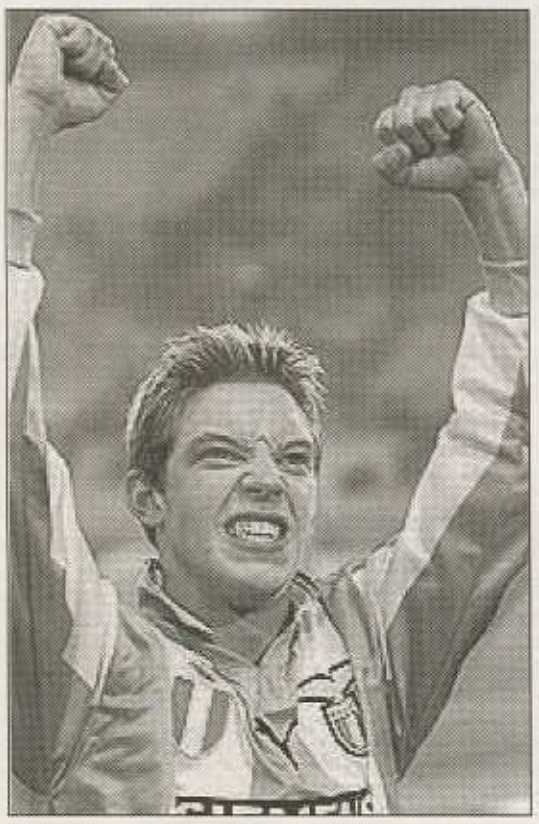
"Certain young people come along with a special determination, and after speaking to him I expect that from Alan Smith. That desire will take him a long way".

Smith continued the exodus of players from cash-strapped Leeds, who were relegated from the premier league this month, and his decision to join such bitter rivals is sure to anger his former team's fans.

"I have grown up at Leeds and spent some wonderful years there and I would like to thank everyone associated with the club," said Smith, who waived the signing-on fee he was entitled to in the transfer as a sign of goodwill towards his former club.

"Now I feel it's the right time to move on and there could be no better club than Manchester United," Smith added. "To be joining one of the best clubs in the world is fantastic and I am looking forward to the new challenges that face me."

The combative Smith joins strikers Ruud van Nistelrooy, Louis Saha, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer and Diego Forlan at Manchester United, who finished third in the premier league last season and failed to reach the Champions League quarter-finals for the first time since 1996.



Alan Smith: Signs a five-year deal with Manchester United.

Smith will hope to have a similar impact to the last striker to swap Leeds for Manchester, Eric Cantona.

The enigmatic Frenchman joined Manchester United in 1992, inspiring the club to their first league title for 26 years in his first season and sparking an era of domination of English soccer.

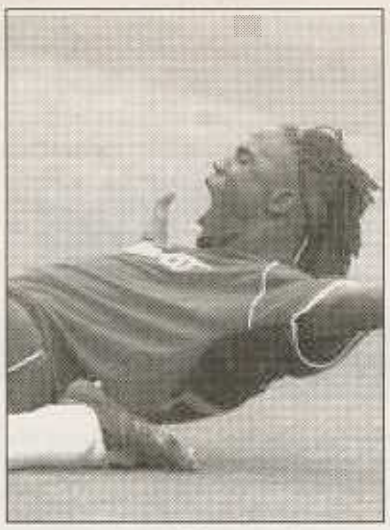
Leeds chairman Gerald Krasner explained the club's decision to allow Smith to leave just days after England goalkeeper Paul Robinson joined Tottenham Hotspur.

"We are beginning a major programme of rebuilding and restructuring at Leeds and we both believe his (Smith's) immediate future in football lies away from Elland Road," Krasner said in a statement.

Smith, who has played eight times for England and is on stand-by for next month's European Championship, scored 56 goals in just over 200 appearances for Leeds since making his debut in 1998.

MELCHIOT'S DIRTY DOZEN

Chelsea's out-of-contract defender Mario Melchiot has revealed he has received 12 offers to leave Stamford Bridge.



Mario Melchiot: Has received 12 offers to leave Chelsea.

The Dutch international is available on a free transfer after seeing out his contract in West London.

Melchiot is attracting the interest of a host of clubs including five from The Premiership and seven from Spain and Italy.

Villarreal are believed to be one of the Spanish clubs keen on the securing Melchiot's services.

Reports emanating from Spain suggest Villarreal have held talks with the Dutchman as they look to build on their impressive campaign last season.

The former Ajax star is unsure of his future, but admitted he wants to go somewhere with UEFA Champions League football on offer.

"Whether it is going to be in England or anywhere else I can't decide at the moment," Melchiot told the *Daily Star*.

"I knew from the beginning of the season I was going to be on a Bosman. I knew exactly what I was doing.

"I have been in the situation twice before and I'm very comfortable with it."

CUP HEROES GO BUST

Nationwide Conference side Telford United will go into liquidation after efforts to bring in an investor failed.

Rod Butcher, a partner in Birmingham-based firm Moore Stephens Corporate Recovery, said: "Reluctantly, we have advised the directors that the only choice now is to cease trading and go into liquidation.

"At the close of the season the club had no income and could not meet its debts to the players and other creditors.

"We will now work with the directors so that we can achieve the best possible settlement for the club's creditors.

"We are also still looking for a buyer or investor who could resurrect the club."

The club, which was founded in 1872, was thrown into crisis in March, when former chairman Andrew Shaw's Miras Contracts business collapsed.

Last season, Telford enjoyed a fairytale FA Cup run before being knocked out by subsequent finalists Millwall.

EUROPEAN CH

PORTUGAL 200

Written and compile

LATVIA

Not a great deal is expected of Latvia in their first outing in a major football tournament. Their surprise qualification confounded many experts, but the euphoria of making it as far as the finals has been dampened somewhat by the group they have been placed in.

Group D is appropriately titled the Group of Death, as it contains three heavyweights- teams that are capable of going on and winning Euro 2004- and then Latvia, who many believe will be the whipping boys. Yet this may put the team into the spotlight.

Latvia overcame the likes of Sweden, Poland and Hungary on the way to finishing second in Group 4, while the 3-2 aggregate victory over Turkey, who had finished third in the 2002 World Cup, was perhaps the biggest upset in qualifying and heralded the start of celebrations for the tiny nation.

While recent results do not point to a good showing in Portugal, the team have become accustomed to dealing effectively with supposedly stronger opposition.

The country itself has only 2.3 million people, and the main sport is not even football. Due to the chronic lack of football guernseys in Latvia, supporters may well be spotted in the larger ice hockey tops- as that is the major sport in the country.

Apart from World Cup and European Championship qualifiers, in which Latvia have been out-performed up until now, the only competitive matches played by the national team have been in the Baltic Cup, which includes their lightweight neighbours Lithuania and Estonia.

Indeed, the country only regained independence from the crumbled Soviet Union in 1991.

At the forefront of this miraculous rise in fortune is 48-year old Aleksandr Starkovs, who rose to prominence as a young striker decades ago. Starkovs has been involved in the national set-up since 1998, and he took over the head coaching role in 2001.

His team plays with a compact, counter-attacking 4-4-2 system, where pressing and quick breaking are key features of their style of play.

The bulk of the provisional squad come from current league leaders Skonto Riga, with a sprinkling of players from neighbouring Russia and the odd player in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ukraine and England.

Goalkeeper Aleksandrs Kolinko marshalls a defence which includes former Arsenal centre-back Igors Stepanovs, now at Beveren. Also in the centre is veteran Mihails Zemlinskis, with Aleksandrs Isakovs and Dzintars Zirnis as fullbacks.

While these defenders are of advanced age, their international experience is very limited, and they may find themselves stretched against the skilful strikers they will come up against, particularly the powerful Dutch centre forwards and speedy wingers.

The role of the four midfielders is basically to restrict space to the opposition. Valentin Lobanovs is at the centre of this effort in his capacity as defensive-midfield lynchpin, while Vitalis Astafjevs, who recently celebrated his 100th cap for Latvia, will play alongside him. The right flank is occupied by Imants Bleidelis while the coach will be looking for some artistic flair from Andrejs Rubins on the left.

The selection of 18-year old Skonto Riga duo Igor Semjonovs and Kristaps Blanks is certainly a surprise as it would have been expected that Starkovs would select older players.

Supporters of Latvia will be hoping that the forward do not fire blanks.

Southampton hit-man Marians Pahars leads the way for Latvian players in Europe as he made a name for himself in the English Premier League. In fact, comparisons were drawn with Michael Owen, given his short stature and speed on the ball.

Pahars will play in a supporting role to point striker Maris Verpakovskis, upon whom most hoped are pinned.

The 24-year old Kyiv Dynamo player is the standout, the hero of the play-off victory over Turkey, and has the perfect opportunity to prove doubters of his talent wrong (such as the recently relegated Wolverhampton Wolves).

On paper, this side simply do not have the quality to trouble Germany, Netherlands and the Czech Republic, but the same was said of the latter in Euro 96.

Pitted in a tough group alongside Germany, Italy and Russia, the Czechs played their way out of trouble and all the way to the final of that tournament.

While a repeat of this feat is highly unlikely, Latvia should take heart in the unconvincing form of two of their opponents, while Dutch defensive shortcomings may let in Verpakovskis and co.

ABSW Prediction: First Round.

SQUAD LIST:

Aleksandrs Kolinko	goalkeeper	Rostov (Russia)	28
Andrejs Piedels	goalkeeper	Skonto Riga	33
Andris Vanins	goalkeeper	Torp-Metallurg (Russia)	24
O Blagonadezdins	defender	A Vladikavkaz (Russia)	31
Aleksandrs Isakovs	defender	Skonto Riga	30
Igors Korablovs	defender	Ventspils	29
Valentins Lobanovs	defender	Skonto Riga	32
Maris Smirnovs	defender	Ventspils	28
Igors Stepanovs	defender	Beveren (Belgium)	28
Arturs Zakresevskis	defender	Skonto Riga	32
Mihails Zemlinskis	defender	Skonto Riga	34
Dzintars Zirnis	defender	Metalurgs Liepaja	27
Vitalis Astafjevs	midfielder	Admira (Austria)	33
Kristaps Blanks	midfielder	Skonto Riga	18
Imants Bleidelis	midfielder	Viborg (Denmark)	28
V Kolesnicenko	midfielder	Torp-Metallurg (Russia)	24
Jurijs Laizans	midfielder	CSKA Moscow (Russia)	25
Jurgis Pucinskis	midfielder	Skonto Riga	31
Andrejs Rubins	midfielder	Shinnik (Russia)	25
Igor Semjonovs	midfielder	Skonto Riga	18
Viktors Dobrecovs	striker	Metalurgs Liepaja	27
Mihails Miholaps	striker	A Vladikavkaz (Russia)	29
Marians Pahars	striker	Southampton (England)	27
Vits Rimkus	striker	Ventspils	31
Anderjs Stolcers	striker	Fulham (England)	29
Maris Verpakovskis	striker	Kyiv Dynamo (Ukraine)	24

GERMANY

One could be forgiven for thinking that Germany are treating these European Championships as a warm up event for the 2006 World Cup on their home patch.

The Nationalmanschaft endured a great deal of pain in the years prior to the 2002 World Cup- knocked out in the quarter-finals in France, eliminated at the bottom of their group at Euro 2000, not to mention the ignominy of losing 5-1 at home to arch-rivals England.

But the unexpected appearance in the final against Brazil in Yokohama has helped restore lost faith in the national team, and they are thirsty for more success.

Germany have an unparalleled record at the European Championships, winning it three times (1972, 1980, 1996), and the message they will be delivering is: "Never write us off",

Coach Rudi Voller has certainly made a conscious effort to groom players that will most likely feature in the squad in two years time. He has effectively abandoned the traditional selection policy where young talents are consistently overlooked in favour of experienced veterans.

Indeed, past coaches have had little option but to choose a core group of survivors given the lack of world class players coming through the ranks in the Bundesliga. This time around though, Voller looks to have struck a balance.

In many respects, Arsenal invincible, Jens Lehmann would be a better choice than the controversial but often brilliant goalkeeper Oliver Kahn, while record setter Timo Hildebrand (who kept many clean sheets at the start of the season) is a useful reserve option.

While inspirational sweeper Carsten Ramelow has retired from the international arena, the central defensive department can still boast three experienced campaigners in Jens Nowotny, Christian Worns and Werder Bremen captain Frank Baumann, who can also be pushed further forward into midfield.

Ramelow was the main casualty from the embarrasing 5-1 loss to Romania in the recent friendly in Bucharest, as he decided after the match to make way for long-term prospects like Arne Friedrich.The right-back slot will be taken by Andreas Hinkel of VfB Stuttgart, a fine player indeed. On the left, the out of contract Christian Ziege has won a reprieve after missing out on the original selection.The engine room has often been criticised for lacking spark and invention, but the German team have a star in Michael Ballack. While he does not necessarily dominate proceedings in the mould of Lothar Matthaus or Steffen Effenberg, he is nevertheless truly influential as his purposeful runs and crisp passing frequently cause danger to the opposition.

His partner in crime in Korea/Japan, Bernd Schneider, is still there, and this is a capable offensive partnership.

Veterans Jens Jeremies and surprise choice Dietmar Hamann will contest the holding role, although the younger Sebastian Kehl would be a wiser selection.

Up front, the four strikers lack the mobility and skill of their Dutch and Czech counterparts, although they remain deadly from crosses and set-piece situations.

Miroslav Klose is a case in point- all five of his goals in the World Cup were headers.

The one player with any playmaking skills to speak of, Oliver Neuville, has been dropped from the squad in favour of the in form Thomas Brdaric.Although the German federation failed in its attempt to convince impressive

Werder Bremen striker Ivan Klasnic to play for them at Euro 2004 (he opted for Croatia instead), the lively Kevin Kuranyi may become hot property after the tournament.

The 22-year old is set to become Germany's top striker over the next couple of months, and he will almost certainly lead the charge in two years time.

Resolve in the face of adversity is a quality that German teams possess in abundance, and they will be pushed to the limits by the Netherlands and Czech Republic.Germany have the players to progress beyond Group D in 2004, although they may have one eye on 2006.

ABSW Prediction: Quarter- Finalists

SQUAD LIST:

Oliver Kahn	goalkeeper	Bayern Munich	35
Jens Lehmann	goalkeeper	Arsenal (England)	34
Timo Hildebrand	goalkeeper	VfB Stuttgart	
Frank Baumann	defender	Werder Bremen	28
Arne Friedrich	defender	Hertha Berlin	25
Andreas Hinkel	defender	VfB Stuttgart	22
Philipp Laum	defender	VfB Stuttgart	20
Jens Nowotny	defender	Bayer Leverkusen	30
Christian Worns	defender	Borussia Dortmund	32
Christian Ziege	defender	Out of contract	32
Michael Ballack	midfielder	Bayern Munich	27
Fabian Ernst	midfielder	Werder Bremen	25
Paul Freier	midfielder	Bochum	24
Torsten Frings	midfielder	Borussia Dortmund	27
Dietmar Hamann	midfielder	Liverpool	30
Jens Jeremies	midfielder	Bayern Munich	30
Sebastian Kehl	midfielder	Borussia Dortmund	24
Bernd Schneider	midfielder	Bayer Leverkusen	30
Fredi Bobic	striker	Hertha Berlin	32
Thomas Brdaric	striker	Hannover	
Miroslav Klose	striker	Kaiserslautern	26
Kevin Kuranyi	striker	VfB Stuttgart	22

AMPIONSHIPS 4

GROUP D

l by Peter Damalas

CZECH REPUBLIC

hree into two simply does not go. This is precisely the reason why Group D is widely regarded as the toughest section in Euro 2004.

For the Czech Republic, they again have to contend with two owerful European nations if they are to progress to the quarter nals and beyond.

Pressure will be on this side not to waste another major tournaent in which they have entered as dark horses. After qualifying r the previous European Championships in the Low Countries ith a perfect ten from ten record in the qualifiers, the Czechs lost eir opening two fixtures to host nation

Netherlands and eventual champions France, and they were ıly eliminated even before their final first round fixture with enmark.

Then the failure to qualify for the 2002 World Cup proved to be e final straw for coach Jozef Chovanec, who was replaced with ssistant and former Under-21s boss, Karel Bruckner.

The 64-year old presided over a successful qualifying campaign nd a remarkable twenty match unbeaten run which ended in larch after a defeat by the Republic of Ireland.

Recent form is a concern, as the one-nil loss to Japan on home oil raised a number of doubts about the Czechs prospects.

But the advantage of losing these two matches is that the zech Republic will not enter the tournament with a bubble to urst. They will concentrate their efforts and energies in their final vo warm-up fixtures on rediscovering their form and fitness in me for their first match against Latvia.

Playing the tiny footballing nation first is another advantage, as e Czech team will be heavily favoured to claim all three points- eaning they will be challenging for a top two finish in the match- s against the Netherlands and Germany.

New Chelsea recruit, the appropriately named Petr Cech, will eep goals in Portugal, while veteran Sparta Prague custodian aromir Blazek will have to be content with a supporting role.

The defensive third has a relatively youthful look to it.

Zdenek Grygera and Martin Jiranek can both play on the right hand side of the traditional back four, or in the centre, where they will be competing with youngster Tomas Hubschmann and veteran powerhouse Rene Bolf.

The lack of a conventional left-back means that Udinese midfielder Marek Jankulovski marshalls that side of the defence, with more emphasis on his attacking role.

Bruckner can boast an embarrassment of riches when it comes to the playmaking department in midfield, the only problem is how he will deploy his classy players within a cohesive unit.

Juventus stalwart Pavel Nedved is certainly the one to look out for. His powerful running, passing and shooting skills means that he will be targeted by opposition defenders and defence minded midfielders.

Wide men Karel Poborsky and Vladimir Smicer will play an important part in easing the burden on the influential Nedved, as will Borussia Dortmund player Tomas Rosicky, who will be placed just behind the strikers.

With so much quality and goalscoring potential coming out of midfield, the holding position is often overlooked. The team may play with only one striker in giant Jan Koller, who is able to ride the challenges and open up space for his opponents.

Should the Czech team find itself in a spot of bother however, young Liverpool sensation Milan Baros will be brought in to support Koller and give another dimension to the attack with his pace and accurate finishing.

The 2004 edition will attempt to emulate the feats of the Euro 96 squad which unexpectedly progressed all the way to the final of that tournament in England. This time they are among the favourites, and will be looking forward to shaking up the European football scene once again.

A win over Latvia and one more decent result may see the Czechs through, although the Dutch are looking good in attack while Germany have such a strong tournament winning mentality.

ABSW Prediction: First Round / Quarter-finalists.

SQUAD LIST:

Jaromír Błazek	goalkeeper	Sparta Prague	31
Petr Cech	goalkeeper	Rennes (France)	22
Antonín Kinsky	goalkeeper	S Moskovskaya (Russia)	
Rene Bolf	defender	Banik Ostrava	30
Zdenek Grygera	defender	Ajax (Netherlands)	24
Tomas Hubschmann	defender	Sparta Prague	22
Marek Jankulovski	defender	Udinese (Italy)	27
Martin Jiranek	defender	Reggina (Italy)	25
Pavel Mares	defender	Z St. Petersburg (Russia)	
David Rozehnal	defender	Club Brugge (Belgium)	
Tomas Ujfalusi	defender	Hamburg (Germany)	26
Tomas Galasek	midfielder	Ajax (Netherlands)	31
Pavel Nedved	midfielder	Juventus (Italy)	31
Jaroslav Plasil	midfielder	Monaco (France)	
Karel Poborsky	midfielder	Sparta Prague	32
Tomas Rosicky	midfielder	B Dortmund (Germany)	23
Vladimir Smicer	midfielder	Liverpool (England)	31
Roman Tyce	midfielder	1860 Munich (Ger)	27
Stepan Vachousek	midfielder	Marseille (France)	24
Milan Baros	striker	Liverpool (England)	22
Marek Heinz	striker	Banik Ostrava	
Jan Koller	striker	B Dortmund (Ger)	31
Vratislav Lokvenc	striker	Kaiserslautern (Ger)	30
Miroslav Matusovic	striker	Banik Ostrava	23

HOLLAND

ncredible skill and attacking quality is synonymous with Dutch football, but the national side have built a unique reputation as a team which plays with an attractive style yet selfestructs at the critical stages of major tournaments.

Supporters will be hoping that the loss in qualifying to their nemes, the Czech Republic- which confined them to the play-offs- is the nly point of suffering in this campaign for glory. Certainly, recent sults have put the rest of Europe on notice that the Netherlands e not a spent force and that they are well and truly in the running r the top prize in early July.

The six-nil thrashing of Scotland in the second leg of the play-off, ter they lost the first match at Hampden Park by a single goal, saw e players rediscover their fluidity and potency.

The introduction of Ajax starlets Wesley Sneijder and captain afael van der Vaart in the central midfield playmaking role and up ont alongside the main striker sparked an amazing turnaround, hile the relegation of veteran defender Frank de Boer to the bench as construed as the passing down of the baton to the younger eneration.

Coach Dick Advocaat, in his second spell with the national team ter taking them as far as the World Cup quarter-finals in 1994, has elected a balanced squad, rich in talent and possessing experince and youthful exuberance in abundance.

His famous opening address to the team is set to be the theme r these European Championships. "Now we have to get revenge."

Indeed, the Dutch have been waiting four long years to kick a ball n the big stage.

After the heartbreak of losing out yet again on penalties to Italy in e dramatic semi-final of Euro 2000 on home soil, the team did not ven qualify for the 2002 World Cup, which lead to the immediate ismissal of Louis van Gaal and re-instatement of Advocaat.

The 56-year old former Rangers manager has adopted a number f tactical formations since taking the helm, including 3-5-2 and 4- -3. He is likely to settle on 4-4-2, with attacking full-backs, a diaıond shape in midfield, and two centre-forwards.

Despite a number of howlers during the English Premier League eason which threatened to destroy his reputation as a calm and omposed goalkeeper, Edwin van der Sar retains the Number 1 pot.

The selection of the declining Frank de Boer is a statement that ere is little or no cover in the centre of defence. Recent AC Milan signing Jaap Stam will have his work cut out leading a makeshift backline.

While Michael Reiziger can play anywhere in the back four, and Wilfred Bouma and youngster Johnny Heitinga can both slot in at right-back or in the centre, none of these have really nailed down their positions, and the opposition may pick up on the uncertainty shown at the back and target the defenders as a means of defeating the Dutch.

The left-back position will be contested by converted midfielders, such is the dearth of talent in this field. Giovanni van Bronkhorst, currently on loan at Barcelona but owned by Arsenal, is favoured to oust Phillip Cocu and Boudewijn Zenden of all people, for the post.

The Netherlands boast the most intimidating group of midfielders and forwards in Europe.When push comes to shove, the likes of Cocu, Edgar Davids and Clarence Seedorf come to the fore. The latter two in particular have shone in the past two seasons.

On the flanks, Zenden and Marc Overmars face stiff competition from Andy van der Meyde on the right, and new Chelsea player Arjen Robben on the left, although his facing an uphill battle to be fit and ready in time for the start of the tournament.

The Dutch traditionally combine patient build ups with sudden bursts of speed,and the players selected are well versed in the ideals of 'possession and pace'.

Much is said about the likes of Thierry Henry, Michael Owen and Christian Vieri,but the Dutch strikers are perhaps the most explosive of all.

Manchester United star Ruud van Nistelrooy has rediscovered his goalscoring touch in the last weeks of the Premiership season culminating in the FA Cup Final, and he enters his first major tournament primed and ready to put opponents to the sword with his deadly finishing.

He may be joined in the frontline by Roy Makaay, whose consistency in both the Spanish and German leagues in the past two seasons makes him difficult to drop.

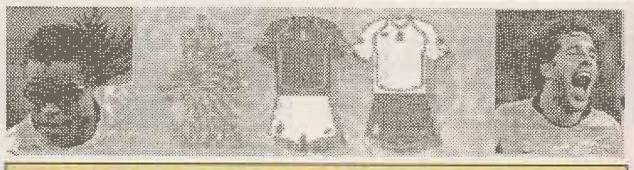
The player likely to miss out on a starting berth is Patrick Kluivert, who has not enjoyed the best of luck at Barcelona.

His club career has reached the crossroads after the Catalans decided to release him and four other members of the Dutch squad within their ranks.

The all-time leading national team scorer is vastly talented in terms of assisting and finishing, but the partnership with van Nistelrooy did not work out and he may be sacrificed for a more creative player.

Completing the quartet of out-and-out-strikers is surprise choice Pierre van Hooijdonk, 34, of Turkish champions Fenerbahce.

The Netherlands have the quality to finish in the top two of this incredibly tough group. A place in the final stages of the tournament awaits.Three into two simply does not go.



ABSW Prediction: Finalists

SQUAD LIST:

Edwin van der Sar	goalkeeper	Fulham (England)	33
Ronald Waterreus	goalkeeper	PSV Eindhoven	33
Sander Westerveld	goalkeeper	Real Sociedad (Spain)	29
Frank de Boer	defender	Rangers (Scotland)	34
Wilfred Bouma	defender	PSV Eindhoven	26
G van Bronckhorst	defender	Barcelona (Spain)	29
Johnny Heitinga	defender	Ajax	20
Michael Reiziger	defender	Barcelona (Spain)	31
Jaap Stam	defender	Lazio (Italy)	31
Phillip Cocu	midfielder	Barcelona (Spain)	33
Boudewijn Zenden	midfielder	M'brough (England)	27
Mark van Bommel	midfielder	PSV Eindhoven	27
Edgar Davids	midfielder	Barcelona (Spain)	31
Clarence Seedorf	midfielder	AC Milan (Italy)	28
Wesley Sneijder	midfielder	Ajax	20
A van der Meyde	midfielder	Internazionale (Italy)	24
Marc Overmars	midfielder	Barcelona (Spain)	31
Arjen Robben	midfielder	PSV Eindhoven	20
R van der Vaart	striker	Ajax	21
P van Hooijdonk	striker	Fenerbahce (Turkey)	34
Patrick Kluivert	striker	Barcelona (Spain)	27
Roy Makaay	striker	Bayern Munich (Ger)	29
R van Nistelrooy	striker	Manchester Utd (Eng)	27

BOCA SURVIVE SAO SCARE

Gilberto (left) of Brazil's Sao Caetano, is embraced by teammate Fabio Santos after scoring against Boca Juniors.

Defending champions Boca Juniors survived a scare before going on to beat Sao Caetano on penalties and reach the Libertadores Cup semi-finals.

The Argentine team also missed their first effort in the shootout before winning 4-3, helped by wayward shooting from the Brazilians.

Sao Caetano midfielder Gilberto, who hit the crossbar early on, put the visitors in front in the 58th minute with a superb effort, collecting a back-heeled pass form Fabricio Carvalho, cutting inside a defender and placing the ball into the corner.

Champions three times in the last four years, Boca equalised through substitute Antonio Barijho in the 70th minute, who clinically finishing after an astute pass from Carlos Tevez.

The contest went to sudden death penalties, where goalkeeper Roberto Abbondancieri converted for Boca and Sao Caetano's Marcelo Mattos sent his kick high of the goal.

Boca will face River Plate in the semi-final stage as Fernando Cavenaghi bagged a brace in the 3-1 win at Deportivo Cali to set up a mouth-watering tie against their arch-rivals and defending champions.

In other games, Sao Paulo striker Luis Fabiano scored two more Libertadores Cup goals to hammer Venezuela's Deportivo Tachira 4-1.

The Brazilian giants will face-off against Once Caldas after their 1-0 defeat of Santos in Manizales.

Arnulfo Valentierra, who scored in the 1-1 draw in the first leg, was once again on target with a decisive 70th minute goal sealing a 2-1 aggregate win for the Colombian's and a place in the final four.

Results

Deportivo Cali 1 River Plate 3 (River Plate win 4-1 on agg), **Deportivo Tachira 1 Sao Paulo 4** (Sao Paulo win 7-1 on agg), **Boca Juniors 1 Sao Caetano 1** (Boca Juniors win 4-3 on pens), **Once Caldas 1 Santos 0** (Caldas win 2-1 on aggregate).

AEK SOLD TO STRIKER

Greece forward Demis Nikolaidis has purchased a majority stake in struggling Greek club AEK Athens.

"I have under my control a 58 percent stake in AEK," the Atletico Madrid striker told local radio.

Nikolaidis replaced multinational ENIC in charge of the debt-ridden Greek first division club, whose financial plight has endangered their place in UEFA Cup.

His purchase marks a dramatic return to the club where the striker played for nearly a decade prior to a move to Spain last year.

The 30-year-old is expected to lead the line for Greece at next month's European Championship, and says he is close to resolving a damaging row with AEK players.

Nikolaidis told the team's big earners to accept a major pay cut to help pay off 18 million euros in unpaid taxes.

"I have agreed with 95 percent (of the players). With four of them, whom I've not met, there is a positive atmosphere," he said.

The row had threatened to derail Greece's preparations for Euro 2004 in Portugal, where he will play alongside five AEK players.

Dozens of supporters, believed to back the rescue plan proposed by Nikolaidis, stormed the AEK training camp on May 19. They allegedly attacked players during training, destroyed the clubhouse, damaged cars and looted personal items. That sparked an angry reaction by AEK and Greece playmaker Vassilis Tsartas.

"I don't know how I can face him (Nikolaidis) -- he is the ethical culprit behind these attacks," said Tsartas.

Nikolaidis said his first task would be to ensure that the club does not miss out on a European berth for next season.

LUCIO LEAVES LEVERKUSEN

Brazil World Cup defender Lucio, chased by Chelsea and Manchester United earlier this season, will complete a move from Bayer Leverkusen to Bayern Munich after passing a medical.

Bayern president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said that they had reached agreement with the player and Leverkusen but did not reveal the size of the transfer fee.

Lucio: Moving from Leverkusen to Munich.

Lucio, signed from Internacional Porto Alegre in 2001, played 92 Bundesliga matches for the club.

AC Milan, Juventus, Real Madrid and Barcelona had all been linked with the player.

He becomes Bayern's second major signing for next season after Iran striker Vahid Hashemian, who is joining from VfL Bochum.

The four-times European champions will also have a new coach in Felix Magath, who is leaving VfB Stuttgart to replace Ottmar Hitzfeld.

MEANWHILE Bundesliga crowds reached a new record in the season as almost 11.5million fans passed through the turnstiles.

A resurgence in interest in the Bundesliga, combined with stadium expansion ahead of the 2006 World Cup, saw one million more supporters attend matches than in the 2002/03 campaign.

Precisely 11,466,201 fans took in a Bundesliga game, creating an average attendance of 37,471 per game and an increase of 9.7 per-cent.

DUTCH EXODUS FROM NOU CAMP

Dutch internationals Patrick Kluivert, Philip Cocu, Michael Reiziger and Marc Overmars are to leave Spanish giants Barcelona.

Barcelona, who finished runners-up in the Primera Liga, will not renew defender Reiziger and midfielder Cocu's contracts which expire at the end of the season, the club's director of football Txiki Begiristain said in a statement.

Kluivert and Overmars still have a year to run on their contracts but Barcelona said the two forwards were free to move on, while Turkish international goalkeeper Rustu Recber is also expected to leave the club.

Barcelona confirmed they had agreed to sign Brazilian defender Juliano Belletti from Villarreal on a four-year contract and said they were interested in recruiting Germany midfielder Michael Ballack from Bayern Munich.

Barcelona said they were still negotiating with another Netherlands international, Edgar Davids, and that Dutch defender Giovanni van Bronckhorst, signed on loan from Arsenal last year, would be staying at the club.

All six Dutch players mentioned are in coach Dick Advocaat's provisional Euro 2004 squad.

SEX please, we're Croatian

Croatia coach Otto Baric will allow his players to have sex during Euro 2004 in Portugal.

'Of course, sex is not forbidden,' Baric told Croatian daily Jutarnji List on Thursday.

'After every match in Portugal, players will be given a full day off and will be able to see their wives and girlfriends,' said Baric, who turns 71 in June.

Not bad as many other European sides at Euro have placed a ban on sex.

Coaches have often banned sex during major tournaments because they feel it affects players' effectiveness. Many also think players are distracted by having their wives and girlfriends in the training camp.

Croatia, in Group B, play Switzerland on June 13 followed by European champions France on June 17 and England on June 21.

The team are training at a Croatian mountain resort before a friendly against Slovakia in Rijeka on Saturday. They will move to a training camp in neighbouring Slovenia next week and play the last warm-up game against Denmark in Copenhagen on June 5.

CAMACHO GIVEN REAL TOUGH TASK

Former Spanish national coach Jose Antonio Camacho took the reins at Real Madrid 24 hours after club president Florentino Perez sacked Carlos Queiroz following a trophy-less season.

"I am coming home. I first came here as a kid and now I return as a man. I come here with a great desire to a good job -- I have long dreamed of this," said Camacho, who starts his second spell as coach of the nine-times European champions.

"I want to take Real back to where they belong -- back to the top. Real should be an example to Spain and the world," he said.

The former Spanish international full-back, who played for Real Madrid for 16 seasons between 1973 and 1989, spent 23 days in charge in the summer of 1998 before walking out on former president Lorenzo Sanz, whom he accused of meddling in team affairs.

This time, having arrived after leading Benfica to the Portugese Cup, Camacho expects to be his own man after receiving a contract until the end of June 2006.

"I have my own way of running a team," said Camacho, in pointed reference to his first abortive arrival at the Bernabeu.

Real fired Queiroz, the former Manchester United assistant coach, after losing an unprecedented five league games in a row.

The no-nonsense Camacho demanded improvements.

"Every player has to assume his responsibility and I will do my utmost to ensure that they do," he warned.

"It's up to every coach to get the best out of his players. I come here with a great desire to do a good job," Camacho told a news conference.

To stiffen a suspect defence which leaked 54 league goals -- twice as many as Valencia -- Real have already signed Argentine Walter Samuel from Roma.

"I think Samuel will prove to be a fine signing," forecast Camacho.

Jose Antonio Camacho has been given the reins at Real Madrid following the dismissal of Carlos Queiroz.

Spanish Primera Liga - Final Honours

Champions	- Valencia (Champions Lge)
Runners-up	- Barcelona (Champions Lge)
Third	- Deportivo Coruna (Champions Lge - qualifying)
Fourth	- Real Madrid (Champions League - qualifying)
Fifth	- Athletic Bilbao (UEFA Cup)
Sixth	- Sevilla (UEFA Cup)
Seventh	- Atletico Madrid (Intertoto Cup)
Eighth	- Villarreal (Intertoto Cup)
Cup winners	- Real Zaragoza (UEFA Cup)
Relegated	- Valladolid, Celta Vigo, Murcia.

MOURINHO'S MEN MASTER MONACO

Winning the Champions League final ended up being an easier task for Porto than getting there.

Porto won its first Champions League crown in 17 years, routing Monaco, 3-0, in the title of Europe's premier soccer competition.

Carlos Alberto scored in the first half and Deco and Dmitri Alenitchev tallied in a four-minute span of the second half for Porto, the Portuguese champions who last won the event in 1987.

Porto made it into the final with a 1-0 aggregate win over Spanish power Deportivo La Coruna earlier this month, then had its way with the French club in the improbable title game.

It marked the first time since 1991 that the Champions League final did not feature a club from one of the major leagues in Spain, Italy, Germany and England.

Porto players celebrate their massive Champions League victory over Monaco

Alberto, a 19-year-old Brazilian, spun around and evaded two defenders before putting a shot and into the right corner of the goal in the 39th minute.

With the Monaco struggling to muster any offense, Deco scored in the 71st minute and Alenitchev iced the victory when he got hold of a deflected pass and fired it past Roma four minutes later.

Porto won its second European title in as many seasons, also capturing the UEFA Cup in 2003.

The victory likely marked the finale for Porto coach Jose Mourinho, who has been mentioned as a possible replacement for Chelsea coach Claudio Ranieri.

"My mission is complete (with Porto)," Mourinho said afterward. "It's almost for sure my last match."

Monaco coach Didier Deschamps criticised the refereeing and remained vague about his own future following the defeat.

"There were three or four offside calls which were actually wrong and things like that can change a match," he said.

"There was notably a situation where Fernando Morientes would have been in an ideal position to score," added the former France captain, referring to the 30th minute when the Spanish striker broke clear but was harshly penalised for offside.

"Porto have more experience than we have and were the better team but there were a few episodes in that game that did not play in our favour," added Deschamps.

European Cup Honour List

9 - Real Madrid.
6 - AC Milan.
4 - Bayern Munich, Ajax Amsterdam, Liverpool.
2 - Benfica, Juventus, Inter Milan, Manchester United, Nottingham Forest, Porto.
1 - Barcelona, Celtic, Hamburg SV, Steaua Bucharest, Marseille, Feyenoord, Aston Villa, PSV Eindhoven, Red Star Belgrade, Borussia Dortmund.

MONUMENTAL VENUE CHANGE FOR COPA

Copa America hosts Peru have moved the venue for the opening match and final following a row between directors.

Local organising committee president Arturo Woodman said that matches scheduled to be played in the capital Lima would take place in the old National stadium rather than the newer Monumental.

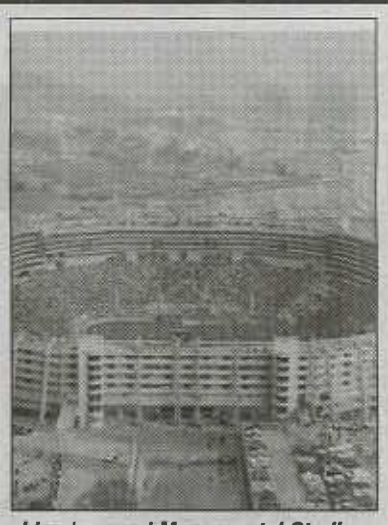
Woodman said the switch was made after Universitario, who own the Monumental, said that the use of the stadium was conditional on sanctions being taken against a referee who sent off five of their players in a match at the weekend.

"The Copa has to go on and so we are going to National Stadium," Woodman told Peruvian television.

Peru Football Federation president Manuel Burga told a media conference: "We are not accepting pressure from anybody. It is lamentable that this has happened for reasons which have nothing to do with the cup.

"We have to understand that this (the Copa America) is for all Peruvians," he added. "It is the image of Peru which we have to look after."

The ageing national stadium holds 45,000 people compared to 70,000 at the Monumental.



Lima's grand Monumental Stadium has been dropped as a venue for July's Copa America.

Universitario drew 1-1 at Cienciano despite having five players shown the red card.

The referee ended the match in the fourth minute of injury time, having earlier signalled eight minutes, after Universitario were left with six players, below the minimum needed to continue.

The Copa America will take place in July.

BERG HANGS UP BOOTS

Henning Berg became the second Norwegian to play 100 internationals in a brief, final appearance for his country in a mid-week 0-0 draw with Wales.

The defender, who plays for Scottish club Glasgow Rangers, is retiring from the national team aged 34.

"It has been a real fairytale," Berg told reporters. "If someone had told me when I was 17 about all the things I would experience as a soccer player, I would have stared at them in disbelief."

He played the first 20 minutes against Wales, with the score still 0-0 when he left the pitch to thunderous applause and a standing ovation from the crowd.

Berg previously played for Blackburn Rovers and Manchester United in the English premier league and for Lillestroem in Norway. He made his international debut against the Faroe Islands in a 2-0 victory in 1992 and has scored two goals for his country.

Thorbjorn Svenssen is the only Norwegian with more international appearances, collecting 104 caps between 1947 and 1962.

Henning Berg: Retires from International football after collecting his 100th cap.

International Friendlies – Results

Germany 7 Malta 0,
Ireland 1 Romania 0,
Estonia 0 Scotland 1,
Norway 0 Wales 0,
Georgia 0 Israel 1,
Austria 0 Russia 0.

Berg played for Norway during a golden era in the 1990s, when the team qualified for the 1994 and 1998 World Cups after a drought stretching back to before World War Two.

"Beating Brazil in the World Cup in 1998 was perhaps the best," he said. Norway beat the defending world champions 2-1 in the opening round of the tournament in France.

The draw with Wales ended Norway's six-match winning streak under new coach Age Hareide.

Wales came closest to scoring when Danny Gabbidon shot from close range early in the second half, forcing a good save from Thomas Myhre. Paul Parry lashed at the rebound but was also denied by Myhre.

For the Norwegians, Rune Lange came close to scrambling the ball into the net in the 80th minute.

Palermo, Cagliari & Livorno into Serie A

Sicilians Palermo beat Triestina 3-1 to move nine points clear of sixth place with just two games remaining and secure top-flight football after a 31-year absence.

Cagliari and Livorno both had 77 points after their victories on Saturday ensured that sixth-placed Fiorentina, on 70 points, could not catch them.

Sardinian side Cagliari beat Salernitana 3-1 while Livorno enjoyed a 3-1 victory at Piacenza.

Five teams are promoted to Serie A this season as the top flight will expand to 20 teams with just three automatic relegations.

The sixth-placed side will play off with Perugia, who finished 14th in Serie A, for a place in Italy's top league.

Ancona, Modena and Empoli were the three teams relegated from Serie A.

Its been noted that Empoli have had a tough time of late after the team's relegation to Serie B.

Rumour had it that the players were not to be paid for three months, those already on contracts due to the side's drop from top flight football.

Gianfranco Zola's Cagliari are on the way up to Serie A following a 3-1 win over Salernitana.

Cagliari, who are from the island of Sardinia, are back in the top flight for the first time since the 1999-2000 campaign.

Zola, a former Napoli star who spent seven seasons at Chelsea before returning to Italy this season, could not have asked for a better season since he hails from Sardinia.

'This is the most beautiful moment,' Zola said. 'It was a very difficult game.

"We were coming from behind but we managed to get the result we wanted. I am extremely happy.'

Zola has in recent weeks been linked with a possible return to Chelsea in a non-playing capacity.

'This is a time to celebrate,' Zola said. 'It has been a difficult and long season, but whatever decision I take, I would like it to be respected.'

Gianfranco Zola: The 'Little Master' is back in the top flight with newly Serie A promoted side Cagliari

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RETRAVISION

Retravision NSW Premier League Finals Series 2003/04

Mendez torments Demons

By Greg Stock

St George skipper Gabriel Mendez put three weeks of inactivity and controversy aside to play a starring role in his sides 3-1 Semi Final victory over Blacktown City at St George Stadium on Sunday afternoon.

Controversy had dogged the former Socceroo in the lead up to the game following a four week suspension handed down by the judiciary after an incident with Blacktown City midfielder Joshua Maguire in their round twenty-one match at St George Stadium which could have seen him out for the remainder of the Finals.

But a midweek appeals tribunal reduced Mendez suspension to two weeks thus clearing him to play, and in a game where the stakes were all or nothing he may well have been the difference.

The turning point of a physical - often spiteful - match came in the 28th minute when Blacktown City defender Paul Karbon was sent from the field for a second bookable offence. Up 1-0 via a Dane Hokin penalty referee Ben Williams, who had earlier booked Karbon for bad language in the 5th minute, had no hesitation in sending the teenager of after he bowled over Mendez in a desperate chase to effect a tackle inside the penalty box.

"While the loss itself was disappointing the standard of refereeing and the [ruling of the] tribunal killed us," Blacktown City coach Brian Brown said, "While I wish St George all the best, it does seem a bit unfair when a refereeing decision can cost us the game and the season."

Forced to survive with ten men for the remaining 68 minutes, Blacktown gave it absolutely everything, conceding a 30th minute goal to Mendez and then defending stoutly until the final ten minutes in which they were overrun by superior numbers.

Despite having his penalty saved by a full-length dive from Demons goalkeeper John Crawley, Mendez stepped up two minutes later to volley a right foot shot from the edge of the area into the bottom right hand corner. It was a brilliant shot from the skipper who led from the front with a commanding performance in the centre of the park.

St George Saints	Sydney Suburban	3
Blacktown City Demons	Perfection	1

Dominating field position and possession for long periods during the second half, the Saints were denied by some excellent defending from Blacktown and some quality goalkeeping from Crawley who seemingly saved everything that was thrown at him. Time and time again the Saints forwards searched for an opening and each time Crawley was equal to the task.

However inside the last ten minutes the mood of the game changed as the Blacktown defence quite noticeably ran out of puff. In the first minute of injury time Stuart Young, in an almost carbon copy of Mendez's first half goal, threw his left foot to an Ante Deur cross, hitting the first time shot which beat Crawley to the near side and slid in around the post.

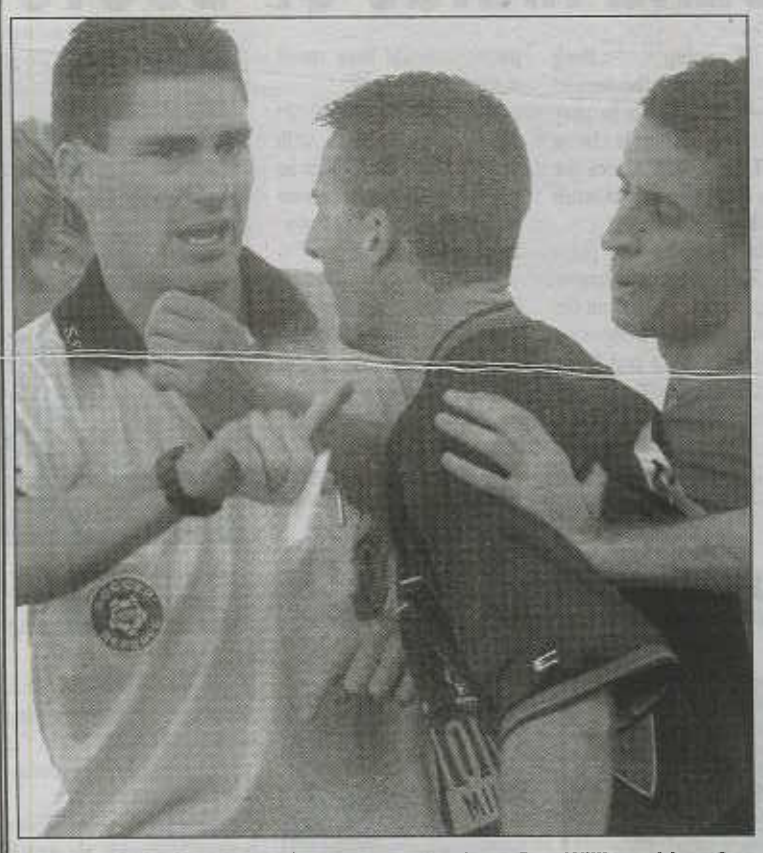
Then substitute James Kovas put away a one on one chance from the edge of the six-yard box after an excellent pass from Young.

"It was an excellent result for us but quite clearly the send off of Paul Karbon was the turning point," Saints coach Manny Spanoudakis said, "we started the game off positively in sharp contrast to our recent games and that was encouraging. We went through a rough patch when we conceded a penalty to Blacktown but then fought our way back and I was happy with the way we were patient in front of goal before scoring two near the end."

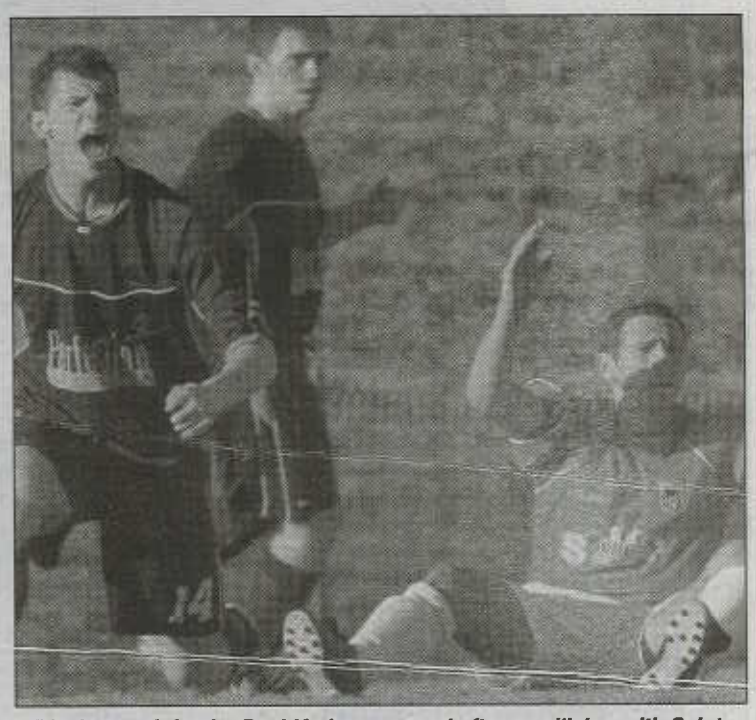
A hotly contested encounter throughout, both sides suffered major injuries to key players at critical stages of the match. Fifteen minutes in St George defender Adrian Webster was carried from the field on a stretcher after damaging his medial ligaments when changing direction in a tackle. "I heard a click and felt the knee go," said Webster, who was replaced by Ante Deur.

"Before the beginning of the season nobody knew Adrian Webster but he has become one of the most consistent players in our team," Spanoudakis said, "to lose him at a key stage of the season is critical but we have a week to work on a replacement before the Belconnen game so hopefully we should be right."

Midway through the second half Demons defender Ben Willard fell awkwardly on his shoulder when chasing Young for a loose ball, and has been diagnosed with an unspecified number of cracked ribs.



Restrained tempers: Kain Rastall gives referee Ben Williams his opinion on a caution



Blacktown defender Paul Karbon saw red after a collision with Saints skipper Gabriel Mendez

ST GEORGE SAINTS 3
(G Mendez 30', S Young 94', J Kovas 98')
BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS 1
(D Hokin 22' pen)
at Gabbie Stadium, Seven Hills

ST GEORGE SAINTS: Richard Patrizi, Simon Vernender, Ivan Zotic, Vince Savoca, Dean Culina, Adrian Webster (Ante Deur 15'), Raphael Bove, Gabriel Mendez, Mirko Jurilj, Stuart Young (Max Sevares 90'), Christian Cevenini (James Kovas 91')
Coach: Manny Spanoudakis

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: John Crawley, Dane Hokin, Damien Foxe, Ben Willard (Patrick Gatt 55'), Joshua Maguire, Kain Rastall, Luke Roodenberg, Paul Karbon, Antonio Fana, Adam Kwasnik, Mark Milligan
Coach: Brian Brown

Yellow Cards: Paul Karbon (BCD) 5' John Crawley (BCD) 8' Richard Patrizi (STG) 21' Kain Rastall (BCD) 32' Dane Hokin (BCD) 74'
Red Card: Paul Karbon (BCD) 28'

Referee: Ben Williams
Assistant Referees: Terry Goodhew and Lindsay Edmonds
Fourth Official: Atila Stibinger

WRITERS: Greg Stock, Paul Goodwin, Aimee Brown
PRODUCTION: Mary Quartly
EDITOR: Dylan Welch
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Kyle Patterson
PHOTOGRAPHY: Carlos Furtado
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RETRAVISION

Retravision NSW Premier League Finals Series 2003/04

Thriller at McKellar

By Paul Goodwin

Seven goals in 93 minutes made for a spectacular Semi Final, with Belconnen forced to equalise no less than three times, before a Golden Goal by Lions Captain Richard Luksic ended the Blue Devils' hopes of hosting the Grand Final.

Instead The Blue Devils will host only the Preliminary Final next week against their closest rivals all season, St George, who edged out Blacktown in the minor Semi Final.

The first half at McKellar was twice interrupted, initially after only five minutes due to a power failure that put the lights went out and then twenty minutes later, after local electricians had managed to correct the fault, only for the lights again to fail during an additional warm up period.

Finally, after nearly 45 minutes, the lights were on again and play was able to recommence.

The first real chance of the game came from a Bankstown corner, in the ninth minute, when Marc Hoenselaars rose, unmarked, only to put his headed attempt wide.

In the 13th minute Mathew Borg put a chance across the face of the goal after the ball had come loose from what appeared to be a rash challenge at the edge of the box.

The Blue Devils cause was not helped when, after 20 minutes, Lee Pietrukowski had to be substituted after dislocating a thumb.

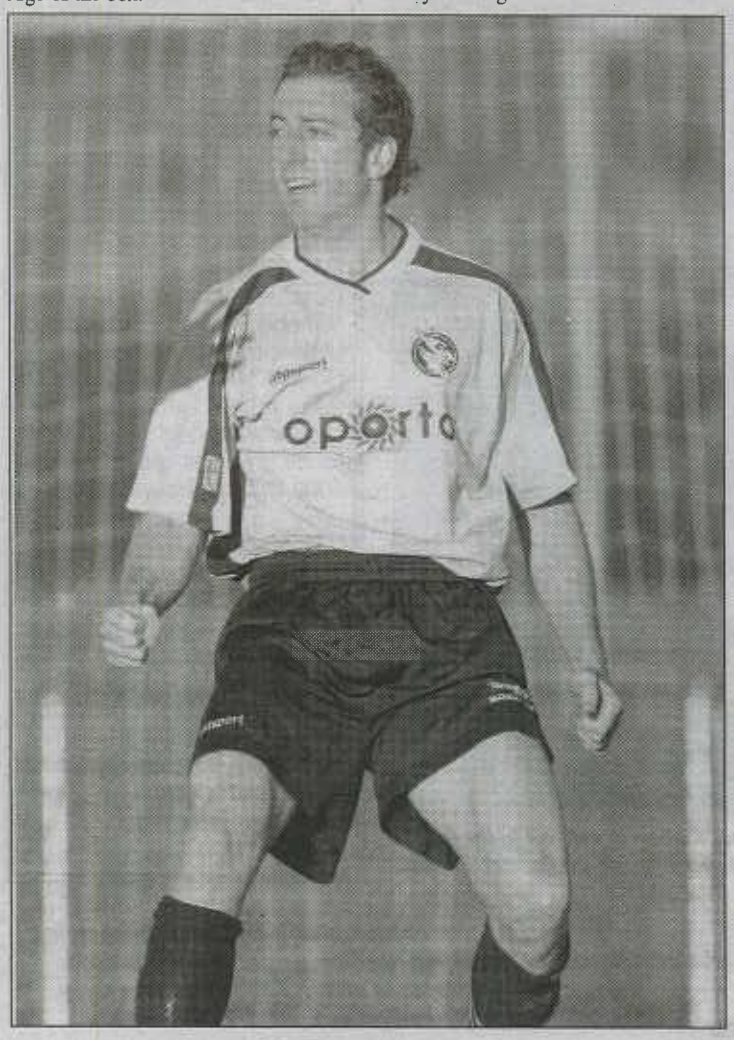
Bankstown were well in the game and it should have come as no surprise when they took the lead. A lead they surrendered three times before eventually coming home with a 93rd minute golden goal.

A Sean Babic cross in the 29th minute was dropped in the six yard box by an uncharacteristically uncertain Tony Giannasca, but the ball fell in the path of the home side's defenders and the ball was soon cleared.

In the 40th minute Babic was in the action again, opening the scoring with a looping header, after a corner was not fully cleared and the resulting cross allowed Babic to get enough on the ball to beat Giannasca.

However the Blue Devils were soon back on equal terms when in the 44th minute Alex Castro picked the ball up from 30-yards out and let fly with a rocket like shot which Bankstown keeper Zlatko Josevski did well to block. But his save could not stop the inevitable, with the ball flying up in the air and then spinning back into the goal from the bounce, with Josevski helpless to prevent it skipping over the goal line.

Going to the sheds locked together at 1-1 it was clear that this was going to be a very exciting second half.



Two footed trouble: David Arranz caused quite the stir with his heavy footed tackle on a Bankstown player

Belconnen Blue Devils	Banc TRADE	**3**
Bankstown City Lions	HYUNDAI	**4**

In the 54th minute a cross from Hoenselaars was met at the far post by Borg who beat two Belconnen defenders, and managed to put a looping header back across goal and past Giannasca, putting Bankstown back in the lead.

Three minutes later the Devils should have been level again, when Castro slipped Ilija Prenzoski past the Bankstown defence. But when the crowd expected a shot he put the ball in front of Daniel Macor, who then tried to put Prenzoski in himself, but put the ball behind his team mate instead.

Castro again put the Devils level in the 69th minute when he hit a free kick which was blocked and then rebounded to Prenzoski, who also failed to beat the Lions defence. But Castro swooped and, second time lucky, buried a glorious shot in the top corner of goal.

All the tension boled over in the 81st minute, when a two-footed tackle by David Arranz resulted in eighteen players getting involved in an ugly wrangle in front of the Bankstown bench.

When referee Jonathon Streater regained control he issued Arranz a red card for his role in the fracás, which will most likely see him miss the Grand Final should the Canberra side win next week, while Hoenselaars received a yellow.

Bankstown got a golden opportunity to take the game early after another reckless tackle, this time by Oscar Zamora on Borg. Streater awarded a free kick at the edge of the box, but Hoenselaars couldn't complete and put the free kick over the bar.

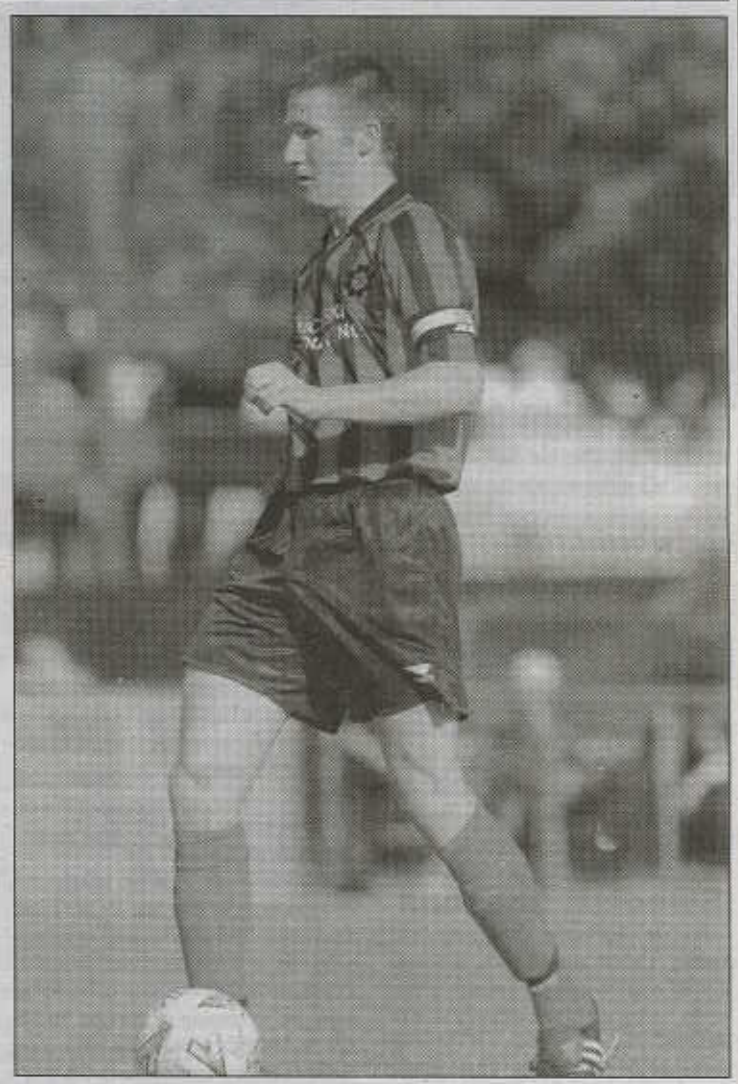
In the 90th minute it looked as if Bankstown had finally put the nail in the Belconnen coffin when a cross from the left was knocked down at the back post by the ever-present Borg and the Blue Devils were unable to clear their lines allowing Babic to knock the ball in from close range.

However a minute later a blunder by Josevski saw Belconnen get the third equaliser of the game. A hopeful cross from Mike Katz, wide on the right, was missed by Josevski and the ball fell on the heels of a defender and across the line.

The game went into extra time, as the pressure of an unrelenting ninety minutes began to show on the ten man Belconnen side.

But it all came to an end when a corner in the third minute of extra time was put into a crowded six yard box. Giannasca seemed to be struggling to gain room to clear the cross and the ball fell at the far post to Luksic, who managed to get the ball across the line for the Golden Goal.

It was the second such winner in two weeks by Luksic whose goals are generally few and far between. It was also Bankstown's first win in Canberra this season.



Captain fantastic: Bankstown skipper Richard Luksic has come from nowhere to score two winning goals in as many weeks

After the game coach Andy Papoulias and his players were out celebrating, returning to Sydney only the next morning after a night to be remembered.

"They played well, fought hard and it was certainly our best performance of the season and came at just the right time," Papoulias said, "we have done magnificently in the final weeks of the season and I am very proud of what the team has achieved.

"We played the game as our Grand Final really, but we now have another one, the real one, to play in a fortnight. Belconnen played very well and I am expecting to meet them again in two weeks time."

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS 3
(A Castro 44', 69')

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS 4
(Z Babic 40', 87', M Borg 54', own goal 89', R Luksic 93')

at McKellar Soccer Centre, McKellar

BELCONNEN BLUE DEVILS Tony Giannasca (C), Lee Pietrukowski (Nic Purdue), Oscar Zamora, Elliot Zwangobani, Michael Katz, David Arranz, Toplica Popovich Anthony Galliozzi (Patrick Lloyd), Alex Castro, Ilija Prenzoski, Daniel Macor
Subs not used: RGK Jimmy Carr, Adam Williams, Matt Valeri
Coach: Chris Tanzey

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: Zlatko Josevski, Paul Wearne, Richard Luksic (C), Sasha Trajcevski (Steve Liavas), Matthew Presello, Saso Boskovski (Dimitri Nicolaou), Marc Hoenselaars, George Nohra, Robbie Gomez, Sean Babic, Matt Borg
Subs not used: RGK Ivan Kovacevic, Phil Hartshorn, Alex Trpkoski
Coach: Andy Papoulias

Referee: Jonathan Streater
Assistant Referees: Ben Williams and Gavin Martin
Fourth Official: Les O'Donoghue
Red Cards: Belconnen: David Arranz
Yellow Cards Belconnen: Alex Castro; Bankstown: George Nohra, Marc Hoenselaars

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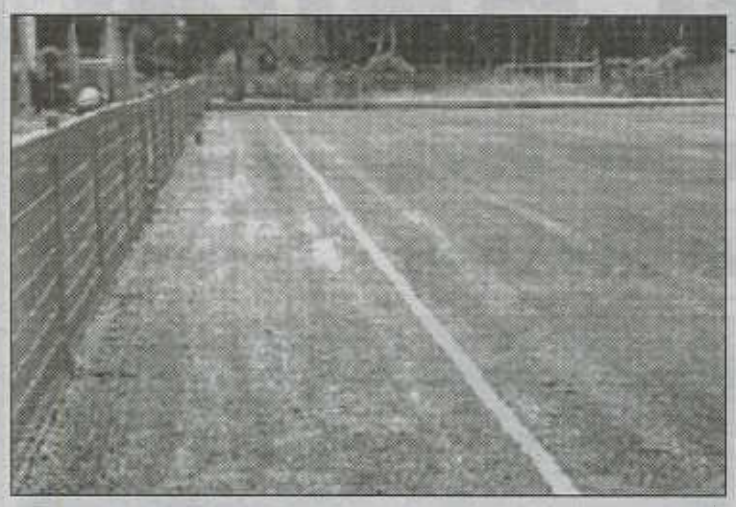
FROM THE SIDELINES

WITH GREG STOCK



Brown stranded on the highway of life

Blacktown City coach Brian Brown had a forgettable Sunday afternoon watching his sides loss at St George Stadium, his afternoon made all the more difficult after his car broke down on the M2 motorway on the way to the game.

Out of range of mobile phone reception, Brown was forced to trudge down the freeway and find an emergency phone from where he was able to call his wife Barbara. She came to his rescue shortly after picking up 'Bomber' just in time to make the mad dash to St George Stadium where he arrived a mere twenty-five minutes before kick off. Sadly his afternoon never recovered as he watched his side bow out of contention for the Grand Final 3-1.

Swedish seasons

Former Rockdale City Suns and Sydney United striker Nick Bosevski slipped quietly into the country a few weeks back fresh from a two year stint in Sweden. On the books of Second Division club Norkopping, Bosevski has been released following an injury riddled second season keen to reignite his career back here in Australia.

"Playing in Sweden for two seasons was a tremendous experience," Bosevski said to FTS last week, "the set up over there is just terrific, and I really enjoyed the time I spent there. Norkopping is probably the third or fourth most supported team in the league so we played regularly in front of 15,000 or so people each game which was amazing."

A regular first team player in his debut season, Bosevski struggled with a hip injury early in his second season curtailing his effectiveness as the clubs first choice striker.

"The injury was a real pain. It started off in my hip but because I came back a little too soon, the other muscles in my legs were sore because they compensated for the hip problem. I then got hamstring problems and that was the end of the season. Hamilton Thorpe also joined the club and from a personal standpoint it was unfortunate that I didn't get a chance to play with him all that regularly."

Another Aussie playing in the Swedish league was former Marconi and A.P.I.A.-Leichhardt goalkeeper Ante Covic. "We ran into Ante at one of our games which was great, caught up and had a few beers. He had just become first choice goalkeeper so he was doing well."

Since returning to Australia four weeks ago Bosevski has linked up with his old Suns coach Mile Todorovski at First Division club Liverpool Bossy. The main aim of the exercise is to get fit and prepared for another tilt at playing overseas.

"To be honest I am just enjoying getting back on the park and putting the injury behind me. Mile has offered me an opportunity to play and for me I just want to get my fitness back up again and hopefully my manager can organise something for me overseas. I would be interested in playing in the new league here in Australia but it seems it could be months before it's ready, so in the short term I have to look overseas if I want to continue as a professional player."

Ancién Regime

While the English Premier League record books were rewritten by an undefeated Arsenal in this year's competition, the local NSW amateur ranks has produced a side to rival the form of The Gunners.

The Carss Park Over 35's playing in the local St George competition has been taking the league by storm posting an already impressive record of 7 and 0 with a for and against record of plus 40 goals. Coached by former Stanmore Hawks and Belmore Hercules boss Chris Karasis and managed by Michael Sivris, the side features some of the best players the Sydney soccer scene has produced including Tom Pontidas, George Kalogeras, Peter Papoythis, Spiro Hantzis, Manny Spanoudakis, Paul Andricopoulos, Aytec Genc, even player manager Leo Karis.

"It's a great team, it hardly needs a coach, " said a rather humble Karasis, "we had guys like Eric Hristodoulou who are just dying to turn thirty five just to play with us and already we have had three or four other who have said they want to join us for next year!"

FTS will keep its readers updated on the teams progress to see if they can go through the entire season undefeated.

Fickle footy

Soccer can be a fickle game sometimes, just ask Dulwich Hill striker Jimmy Bakis. The former Sydney Olympic and Parramatta Eagles goal scorer has played just two games for his new club before being replaced thirty minutes into the game against Manly-Warringah Dolphins.

"I've torn a muscle in my groin and I need to have an operation at some stage in the next few weeks," said a disappointed Bakis, "I did it with Sydney Olympic during the last National League Season and elected to play on and it probably did me more harm than good. There were times when I couldn't turn without pain and I really struggled to play consistently, but I got through and then when I had a few weeks off it seemed to get better."

An electrician by trade, Bakis returned to the playing arena to help out Jimmy Patikas at Dulwich Hill but knew something wasn't quite right when he copped a bad tackle in the Dolphins game.

"It was a fifty-fifty tackle, nothing nasty, but I seemed to have overstretched myself and I knew immediately something was wrong. The diagnosis is that I need an operation and probably two months of rehab, so that's this winter season gone. The main aim [is now] the summer league later this year."

Another of Bakis' former Olympic teammates, Michael Kladis is another who currently has a lot of spare time on his hands as he recovers from an arthroscope on his knee sustained in a match for Fraser Park Dragons.

"It has come at a bad time in the season," said Kladis, who is currently in a knee brace following the operation, "the year I had at Olympic was somewhat disappointing and I wanted to get back on the park and have a solid season under my belt before the summer league started. I was enjoying being back with Fraser but then this popped up and I'm in a brace for eight weeks with four months out of the game."

All things being equal Kladis may be a chance of resuming for the Dragons late in the year, but the news for Bakis is not so good. He could be out for the season depending on what happens during the operation. We wish both players the best with their rehabilitation and look forward to seeing them back on the field.

You're outta there: Blacktown's Paul Karbon is sent off in the 28th minute of the minor Semi Final for a rough tackle on Gabriel Mendez

SEASON 2000 FLASHBACK

The final year of the old Super League competition saw Leichhardt Tigers line up against Parramatta Eagles in the Minor Semi Final at Gabbie Stadium on the Saturday, with Blacktown City clashing with Bonnyrigg White Eagles in the Major Semi Final at Melita Stadium on the Sunday.

Inspired by a 17th minute goal from their ace Steve Karavatakis the Tigers were cruising early against the Eagles who replied via an excellent header from Korean born Sung Jim Kun eight minutes later. Both teams were locked 1-1 at full time with referee Jonathan Streater taking the game into extra time to find a winner. Sadly for the Eagles it did not prove to be them, with the Les De Celis coached Tigers finding the net in the 109th minute via Karavatakis.

On the Sunday Blacktown City raced to an early 2-0 lead inside fifteen minutes in their clash with Bonnyrigg. White Eagles goalkeeper Trinity Allen was forced to dig the ball out of his net twice after Golden Boot winner Mark Hagger split the defence open to score two individual goals in the 3rd and 15th minute. Despite staging a second half comeback when coach Doug Utjesenovic bought on Robbie Gomez and Leigh Gunn to make a four man forward line, the Demons held out strongly to be the first side into the 2000 Grand Final.

Postscript – Bonnyrigg defeated Leichhardt Tigers at St George Stadium 2-0 in the Preliminary Final to set up a rematch with Blacktown City a week later. In the Grand Final Blacktown were again too strong for Bonnyrigg winning their third successive Grand Final, and second in three years over Bonnyrigg.

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RETRAVISION

Retravision NSW Premier League Finals Series 2003/04

FINALS PREVIEWS WITH GREG STOCK & PAUL GOODWIN

Belconnen V Saints

OVERVIEW

A week ago, the chances of St George being in the Preliminary Final were anything but certain. Their Captain suspended and their star striker in grave doubt, the pundits predicted the Saints would go the same way as Crescent Star and be the second side to exit the final series.

But with captain courageous Gabriel Mendez being reprieved with a reduced suspension and striker Bruno Beddoni able to have a week's rest the outlook is much brighter for the team that lost the Premiership trophy in the last two weeks of the season.

Belconnen, licking their wounds after their losing the chance to host the Grand Final in Canberra for the first time, will go into Saturday's game against St George as slight favourites, based on a generally sound home record and the benefit of not having to make the long journey for the game.

Skipper Tony Giannasca will need to lift his men after the disappointment of the previous weekend and the injury toll that saw reliable defender Adrian Dowling injured during training and possibly out of this game too and Pietrukowski dislocating a thumb during the frenetic Bankstown game.

The locals are always hard to beat in Canberra and their season has been built upon sound defence and organisational strength all round.

Surprising, then, to see the side leak three goals in their latest outing, but it needed one of the most prolific attacks in the league, in Sean Babic and Golden Boot winner Matt Borg, to unlock that tight backline and goalkeeping soundness that has been the hallmark of the Blue Devils all season.

Here the Blue Devils will face no lesser skilled front runners than Stuart Young and Bruno Beddoni, though the latter has been under an injury cloud of late and unable to start in many of the club's recent matches.

It is possible that the Saints will plump for James Kovas or Cristian Cevenini, to lend support to Young, but more will be known once fitness tests and midweek training sessions have been completed.

FORM BOOK

St George have won just two of their last six games – a 2-0 win over Bankstown City in round twenty-two and last weeks 3-1 victory over a ten man Blacktown side in the Semi Finals. Successive losses against Penrith Panthers, Parramatta Eagles and Blacktown City saw them surrender the minor Premiership to Belconnen before they were beaten by Bankstown City in the Preliminary Semi-Final at St George Stadium.

The Blue Devils have lost just one of their last eleven games, and that came last weekend when beaten by Bankstown City by the odd goal in seven. In those same eleven games they have scored 25 goals at an average of 2.27 a match, conceding just 13 with three clean sheets.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

No other player can drive a side like Gabriel Mendez. When he is at his best there is no better playmaker in the league and he is capable of ripping a defence to shreds when he elects to run at defenders from deep.

Up front Stuart Young returned to his best last week scoring a cracking goal and holding the ball up with great authority. At the back goalkeeper Richard Patrizi had another solid game against Blacktown City and looks to be in great touch.

Belconnen's key players are Alex Castro and Ilija Prenzoski. Castro has been slow to get into his stride and has only been seen to full advantage as the season has drawn to its conclusion. His game at Crescent Star helped his side garner the Premiership trophy and his Finals' series game, last weekend, was again a sound one.

Prenzoski, however, has gone off the boil somewhat after doing so well in the middle part of the season.

At one stage a major contender for the Golden Boot a return to form for him here is what the side needs if it is to make it into the major showpiece a week later.

Goals were Prenzoski's stock in trade but his partnership with Daniel Macor has waned in recent times and it seems the pair are both losing confidence and an understanding that had yielded goals for both of them in the main part of the season.

WHO'S HOT

Gabriel Mendez showed the three weeks break has not affected his ball playing ability when he took man of the match honours in his sides 3-1 win over Blacktown City.

His midfield assistant will undoubtedly be the ever scheming Raphael Bove, who will play wide on the right. Bove's performance against the Demons was solid and in the big games like these it is always the big game players like him who will stand up to be counted.

Also be sure to keep eep an eye out for stopper Simon Verrender, who is likely to get the job on the dangerous Daniel Macor.

The Saints most consistent player, he has earned high praise for his ability to blot out an opposition striker and turn defence into attack.

Elliot Zwangobane is consistently one of the best and most reliable players in the squad, week in and week out. Defensively sound as well as creative much of the time he has matured this season and given his side much stability in the middle of the park.

Mike Katz is much the same and never stops working for his side. As a wide midfielder he is a coach's dream, tracking back regularly and getting forward as often as the opposition will allow.

WHO'S NOT

With just two weeks left till retirement, it is a shame that Bruno Beddoni is still being troubled by a chronic knee injury. Capable of winning a game off his own lethal right boot, Beddoni has been carrying this injury for a month now and doesn't look anywhere near as dangerous as he did earlier in the season.

Ivan Zelic has failed to really hit the heights he did as a National league player with Adelaide City and Canberra Cosmos. His defensive skills have been only adequate and he will need to really step up in face of much stronger opposition this weekend.

Twin strikers Prenzoski and Daniel Macor have lost some caste in the lead up to these Finals' series matches. Neither seems able to find the net or help the other to do so. We have seen both players at their best during the season but that form seems to have deserted both of them.

WHY THE SAINTS CAN WIN

The old football adage, 'your only as good as your last game' is one the Saints players are obviously keeping in mind. The win against Blacktown City was just their second in six starts but the confidence it has given the team has lifted morale to new heights.

Gabriel Mendez is a magician with a football. Expect his contribution to be a telling one

A potent forward line with Stuart Young, Bruno Beddoni and Ante Deur starting to hit their straps. Keep an eye out for the tall frame of James Kovas to make a significant impact off the bench in the later stages.

WHY THE SAINTS CAN'T WIN

Injuries can often decide games before a ball is kicked and the Saints have their fair share. Bruno Beddoni is carrying a chronic knee injury while Adrian Webster tore his medial ligament last week necessitating a reshuffle in an already depleted defence.

Just two wins in their last six starts is poor form in anyone's book and their fragile confidence must be a cause for concern. If the Blue Devils can score first and put them under the pump the game could be all over by half-time.

A shaky defence has left goalkeeper Richard Patrizi exposed on far too may occasions. While Patrizi can hold his own with the best of them, he is after all human and Jurilj, Verrender, Culina and co will need to make sure they don't allow the speedy Blue Devils forwards the opportunity to sneak through uninvited.

WHY THE DEVILS CAN'T WIN

An out of form strike force and the loss of midfielder, David Arranz, for the second time in the space of as many games, has left the club short of a key player. They also have a keeper whose form against Bankstown was well down on his usual high standards and a defence that may be beginning to suffer from some self doubt.

Returning to McKellar Soccer Centre for the Preliminary Final - not the Grand Final that they had set their hearts on - may also be a psychological blow that may make it hard for them to stay focussed, knowing that there is now yet another game to play before they can get a chance to revenge themselves on Bankstown.

Belconnen needs things to go right for the win against the side they pipped at the post for the minor Premiership.

WHY THE DEVILS CAN WIN

Belconnen has a very strong presence at McKellar Soccer Centre and holds most of the aces. They have had a three week break leading up to their loss against Bankstown but generally have got back into playing mode to be at their peak for this one.

Their defence is ultra sound and an aging and out of form St George does not look sharp enough to trouble Pietrukowski et al, as the locals are still the best organised side in the League.

PRELIMINARY FINAL

First Grade
Saturday 5th June
2:30pm
Belconnen Blue Devils
vs
St George Saints
at McKellar Soccer Centre

Grade 20
Saturday 5th June
12:00pm
Parramatta Eagles
vs
Penrith Panthers
at McKellar Soccer Centre

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PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 14:

GRADE 13: Newcastle United 2 Macarthur Rams 2, Marconi Stallions 3 Wollongong Wolves 0, Sydney United 1 Bankstown City Cubs 1, Parramatta Eagles 1 Hajduk Wanderers Utd 1, Sydney Olympic 0 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 2, Sutherland Shire Sharks 0 Blacktown City Demons 3, Gladesville Spirit SC 3 Central Coast FC 0.

GRADE 14: Newcastle United 3 Macarthur Rams 1, Marconi Stallions 2 Wollongong Wolves 1, Sydney United 1 Bankstown City Cubs 5, Parramatta Eagles 5 Hajduk Wanderers Utd 0, Sydney Olympic 2 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 0, Sutherland Shire Sharks 2 Blacktown City Demons 1, Gladesville Spirit SC 3 Central Coast FC 0.

GRADE 15: Newcastle United 4 Macarthur Rams 2, Marconi Stallions 3 Wollongong Wolves 1, Sydney United Bankstown City Cubs Postponed, Parramatta Eagles 1 Hajduk Wanderers Utd 0, Sydney Olympic 0 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 1, Sutherland Shire Sharks 2 Blacktown City Demons 3, Gladesville Spirit SC 1 Central Coast FC 0.

GRADE 16: Newcastle United 1 Macarthur Rams 1, Marconi Stallions 1 Wollongong Wolves 0, Sydney United 0 Bankstown City Cubs 0, Parramatta Eagles 4 Hajduk Wanderers Utd 0, Sydney Olympic 3 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 1, Sutherland Shire Sharks 2 Blacktown City Demons 1, Gladesville Spirit SC 0 Central Coast FC 0.

GRADE 18: Newcastle United 3 Macarthur Rams 2, Marconi Stallions 3 Wollongong Wolves 2, Sydney United 2 Bankstown City Cubs 0, Parramatta Eagles 1 Hajduk Wanderers Utd 1, Sydney Olympic 4 A.P.I.A. Leichhardt Tigers 1, Sutherland Shire Sharks 0 Blacktown City Demons 2, Gladesville Spirit SC 1 Central Coast FC 0.

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE - RESCHEDULED FROM ROUND 5:

GRADE 14: Wollongong Wolves 1 Blacktown City Demons 3.

RESCHEDULED FROM ROUND 7:

GRADE 18: Wollongong Wolves 4 Sutherland Shire Sharks 2.

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown City	14	10	1	3	41	12	29	31
Parramatta Eagles	14	8	5	1	26	5	21	29
Sydney United	14	9	2	3	33	14	19	29
Marconi Stallions	14	8	2	4	30	17	13	26
Hajduk Wanderers	14	8	2	4	17	12	5	26
Bankstown City	14	7	3	4	21	14	7	24
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	14	7	3	4	19	14	5	24
Gladesville Spirit SC	14	7	1	6	29	28	1	22
Sydney Olympic	14	5	2	7	13	18	-5	17
Newcastle Utd FC	14	3	5	6	18	25	-7	14
Wollongong Wolves	14	2	5	7	12	23	-11	11
Central Coast Utd	14	3	1	10	7	22	-15	10
Sutherland Shire	14	2	3	9	9	32	-23	9
Macarthur Rams	14	1	1	12	8	47	-39	4

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown City	14	10	2	2	31	10	21	32
Marconi Stallions	14	9	4	1	39	10	29	31
Parramatta Eagles	14	9	3	2	24	6	18	30
Gladesville Spirit SC	14	9	3	2	17	7	10	30
Wollongong Wolves	14	8	1	5	26	18	8	25
Bankstown City	14	6	4	4	22	17	5	22
Sydney Olympic	14	5	5	4	17	9	8	20
Newcastle Utd FC	14	5	5	4	19	18	1	20
Sutherland Shire	14	4	3	7	22	18	4	15
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	14	3	4	7	13	22	-9	13
Hajduk Wanderers	14	2	6	6	17	25	-8	12
Sydney United	14	3	1	10	11	29	-18	10
Macarthur Rams	14	2	3	9	13	38	-25	9
Central Coast Utd	14	0	2	12	7	51	-44	2

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	14	11	2	1	24	7	17	35
Parramatta Eagles	14	11	1	2	26	4	22	34
Sydney Olympic	14	9	2	3	27	15	12	29
Blacktown City	14	9	1	4	31	17	14	28
Gladesville Spirit SC	14	7	4	3	21	11	10	25
Newcastle Utd FC	14	7	2	5	26	17	9	23
Central Coast Utd	14	6	4	4	17	19	-2	22
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	14	3	6	5	9	12	-3	15
Bankstown City	13	4	3	6	8	12	-4	15
Macarthur Rams	14	4	3	7	17	32	-15	15
Sydney United	13	3	2	8	13	19	-6	11
Wollongong Wolves	14	1	6	7	12	23	-11	9
Sutherland Shire	14	0	5	9	11	24	-13	5
Hajduk Wanderers	14	1	1	12	6	36	-30	4

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Parramatta Eagles	14	10	2	2	26	10	16	32
Bankstown City	14	7	4	3	22	11	11	25
Marconi Stallions	14	7	4	3	19	11	8	25
Sydney Olympic	14	7	3	4	21	11	10	24
Sydney United	14	7	2	5	20	17	3	23
Gladesville Spirit SC	14	5	6	3	14	11	3	21
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	14	6	3	5	17	17	0	21
Sutherland Shire	14	6	1	7	18	19	-1	19
Wollongong Wolves	14	4	6	4	17	15	2	18
Blacktown City	14	4	6	4	14	14	0	18
Newcastle Utd FC	14	4	5	5	19	22	-3	17
Macarthur Rams	14	3	4	7	17	22	-5	13
Hajduk Wanderers	14	1	3	10	8	33	-25	6
Central Coast Utd	14	0	5	9	9	28	-19	5

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	14	10	3	1	31	13	18	33
Blacktown City	14	9	0	5	24	14	10	27
Sydney Olympic	14	8	2	4	40	28	12	26
Wollongong Wolves	14	8	2	4	29	18	11	26
Gladesville Spirit SC	14	8	1	5	23	19	4	25
Sutherland Shire	14	7	2	5	27	19	8	23
Parramatta Eagles	14	6	4	4	28	22	6	22
Hajduk Wanderers	14	6	2	6	23	25	-2	20
Sydney United	14	5	4	5	23	18	5	19
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	14	5	3	6	20	32	-12	18
Macarthur Rams	14	4	2	8	23	36	-13	14
Newcastle Utd FC	14	3	1	10	18	34	-16	10
Bankstown City	14	2	3	9	12	30	-18	9
Central Coast Utd	14	1	3	10	16	29	-13	6

PREMIER YOUTH LEAGUE COMBINED

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	70	45	15	10	143	58	85	150
Parramatta Eagles	70	44	15	11	130	47	83	147
Blacktown City	70	42	10	18	141	67	74	136
Gladesville Spirit SC	70	36	15	19	104	76	28	123
Sydney Olympic	70	34	14	22	118	81	37	116
Bankstown City	69	26	17	26	85	84	1	95
Sydney United	69	27	11	31	100	97	3	92
A.P.I.A. Leichhardt	70	24	19	27	78	97	-19	91
Wollongong Wolves	70	23	20	27	96	97	-1	89
Newcastle United FC	70	22	18	30	100	116	-16	84
Sutherland Shire	70	19	14	37	87	112	-25	71
Hajduk Wanderers	70	18	14	38	71	131	-60	68
Macarthur Rams	70	14	13	43	78	175	-97	55
Central Coast Utd	70	10	15	45	56	149	-93	45

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12:

GRADE 13: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2 Fairfield Bulls 0, Northern Tigers 2 Fraser Park - Canterbury 1, St George 0 Hills United 2, Penrith Nepean United 1 Schofields Scorpions 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 Granville Rage 0, Southern Branch 0 Parramatta Star 3.

GRADE 14: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 Fairfield Bulls 0, Northern Tigers 3 Fraser Park - Canterbury 0, St George 1 Hills United 0, Penrith Nepean United 1 Schofields Scorpions 0, Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 Granville Rage 0, Southern Branch 3 Parramatta Star 1.

GRADE 15: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 3 Fairfield Bulls 0, Northern Tigers 2 Fraser Park - Canterbury 1, St George 2 Hills United 1, Penrith Nepean United 0 Schofields Scorpions 4, Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 Granville Rage 1, Southern Branch 3 Parramatta Star 0.

GRADE 16: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0 Fairfield Bulls 0, Northern Tigers 1 Fraser Park - Canterbury 2, St George 1 Hills United 0, Penrith Nepean United 2 Schofields Scorpions 0, Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 Granville Rage 0, Southern Branch 1 Parramatta Star 1.

GRADE 18: Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2 Fairfield Bulls 2, Northern Tigers 0 Fraser Park - Canterbury 2, St George 1 Hills United 1, Penrith Nepean United 3 Schofields Scorpions 4, Manly Warringah Dolphins 9 Granville Rage 0, Southern Branch 0 Parramatta Star 2.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly Warringah	12	11	0	1	32	5	27	33
Parramatta Star	12	8	2	2	26	12	14	26
Bonnyrigg WE	12	7	2	3	17	8	9	23
St George	12	7	0	5	19	15	4	21
Southern Branch	12	6	2	4	20	20	0	20
Granville Rage	12	5	4	3	14	9	5	19
Penrith Nepean Utd	12	5	4	3	14	11	3	19
Fraser Pk - C'bury	12	3	3	6	15	22	-7	12
Northern Tigers	12	4	0	8	12	21	-9	12
Hills Utd Brumbies	12	3	2	7	15	20	-5	11
Schofield Scorpions	12	2	2	8	8	19	-11	8
Fairfield Bulls	12	0	1	11	6	36	-30	1

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly Warringah	12	9	1	2	22	9	13	28
St George	12	8	3	1	29	8	21	27
Schofield Scorpions	12	7	2	3	20	13	7	23
Penrith Nepean Utd	12	6	4	2	16	8	8	22
Bonnyrigg WE	12	5	5	2	18	10	8	20
Fairfield Bulls	12	3	4	5	10	12	-2	13
Granville Rage	12	4	1	7	11	14	-3	13
Northern Tigers	12	3	4	5	14	22	-8	13
Hills Utd Brumbies	12	3	2	7	15	18	-3	11
Southern Branch	12	2	5	5	11	19	-8	11
Fraser Pk - C'bury	12	2	5	5	6	19	-13	11
Parramatta Star	12	0	4	8	9	29	-20	4

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Northern Tigers	12	10	2	0	21	6	15	32
Bonnyrigg WE	12	8	1	3	26	7	19	25
Schofield Scorpions	12	8	1	3	24	10	14	25
Penrith Nepean Utd	12	7	2	3	24	14	10	23
St George	12	7	1	4	20	13	7	22
Southern Branch	12	7	0	5	24	19	5	21
Hills Utd Brumbies	12	5	2	5	20	19	1	17
Fraser Pk - C'bury	12	3	3	6	12	18	-6	12
Parramatta Star	12	3	3	6	15	23	-8	12
Granville Rage	12	3	1	8	14	21	-7	10
Manly Warringah	12	3	0	9	9	27	-18	9
Fairfield Bulls	12	0	0	12	9	41	-32	0

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly Warringah	12	9	0	3	20	6	14	27
St George	12	8	2	2	24	9	15	26
Penrith Nepean Utd	12	6	3	3	22	13	9	21
Fairfield Bulls	12	5	4	3	19	10	9	19
Parramatta Star	12	5	3	4	18	15	3	18
Bonnyrigg WE	12	5	3	4	20	18	2	18
Schofield Scorpions	12	5	2	5	21	22	-1	17
Hills Utd Brumbies	12	4	1	7	19	27	-8	13
Granville Rage	12	4	1	7	14	23	-9	13
Northern Tigers	12	3	3	6	13	19	-6	12
Southern Branch	12	2	3	7	14	26	-12	9
Fraser Pk - C'bury	12	2	3	7	8	24	-16	9

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Parramatta Star	12	9	1	2	43	14	29	28
Manly Warringah	12	6	5	1	30	12	18	23
Fairfield Bulls	12	6	4	2	27	15	12	22
Schofield Scorpions	12	6	2	4	29	28	1	20
Northern Tigers	12	6	1	5	16	16	0	19
St George	12	5	4	3	19	23	-4	19
Hills Utd Brumbies	12	5	3	4	20	18	2	18
Bonnyrigg WE	12	5	2	5	25	28	-3	17
Southern Branch	12	4	3	5	19	22	-3	15
Penrith Nepean Utd	12	4	0	8	22	25	-3	12
Fraser Pk - C'bury	12	1	3	8	15	29	-14	6
Granville Rage	12	0	2	10	11	46	-35	2

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE COMBINED

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly Warringah	60	38	6	16	113	59	54	120
St George	60	35	10	15	111	68	43	115
Bonnyrigg WE	60	30	13	17	106	71	35	103
Penrith Nepean Utd	60	28	13	19	98	71	27	97
Schofield Scorpions	60	28	9	23	102	92	10	93
Parramatta Star	60	25	13	22	111	93	18	88
Northern Tigers	60	26	10	24	76	84	-8	88
Southern Branch	60	21	13	26	88	106	-18	76
Hills Utd Brumbies	60	20	10	30	89	102	-13	70
Granville Rage	60	16	9	35	64	113	-49	57
Fairfield Bulls	60	14	13	33	71	114	-43	55
Fraser Pk - C'bury	60	11	17	32	56	112	-56	50

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE: ROUND 12:

GRADE 13: Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 0 Mt Druitt Town 1, Hurstville City Minotaurs 3 Stanmore Hawks 1, Camden Tigers 1 Belmore Hercules 2, Wollongong United 2 Rockdale City Suns 0.

GRADE 14: Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 1 Mt Druitt Town 3, Hurstville City Minotaurs 3 Stanmore Hawks 1, Camden Tigers 1 Belmore Hercules 2, Wollongong United 2 Rockdale City Suns 2.

GRADE 15: Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 3 Mt Druitt Town 0, Hurstville City Minotaurs 2 Stanmore Hawks 0, Camden Tigers 0 Belmore Hercules 2, Wollongong United 2 Rockdale City Suns 2.

GRADE 16: Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 0 Mt Druitt Town 2, Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 Stanmore Hawks 0, Camden Tigers 2 Belmore Hercules 0, Wollongong United 1 Rockdale City Suns 0.

GRADE 18: Sydney Uni Eastern Lions 0 Mt Druitt Town 2, Hurstville City Minotaurs 4 Stanmore Hawks 2, Camden Tigers 3 Belmore Hercules 0, Wollongong United 0 Rockdale City Suns 13.

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Wollongong United	11	10	0	1	31	2	29	30
Belmore Hercules	11	6	2	3	22	14	8	20
Camden Tigers	11	5	3	3	32	10	22	18
Mt Druitt Town Ran	11	5	3	3	12	13	-1	18
Bathurst '75/Western	10	5	2	3	17	15	2	17
SU Eastern Lions	11	4	4	3	18	15	3	16
Dulwich Hill	10	4	2	4	21	17	4	14
Rockdale City Suns	11	3	3	5	7	12	-5	12
Hurstville City Min	11	3	2	6	15	24	-9	11
Ryde City	10	3	1	6	11	30	-19	10
Stanmore Hawks	11	0	0	11	9	43	-34	0

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Bathurst '75/Western	10	9	1	0	23	4	19	28
Belmore Hercules	11	9	1	1	22	3	19	28
Mt Druitt Town Ran	11	7	2	2	17	6	11	23
Rockdale City Suns	11	3	5	3	13	11	2	14
Ryde City	10	4	2	4	11	12	-1	14
SU Eastern Lions	11	4	2	5	11	13	-2	14
Camden Tigers	10	4	1	5	14	15	-1	13
Hurstville City Min	10	3	3	4	6	10	-4	12
Dulwich Hill	10	2	2	6	8	15	-7	8
Wollongong United	11	2	2	7	13	20	-7	8
Stanmore Hawks	11	0	1	10	7	36	-29	1

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 15

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
SU Eastern Lions	11	9	0	2	23	5	18	27
Ryde City	10	7	2	1	20	8	12	23
Rockdale City Suns	11	5	3	3	17	15	2	18
Hurstville City Min	10	5	2	3	19	10	9	17
Wollongong United	11	5	2	4	27	20	7	17
Dulwich Hill	10	4	4	2	12	9	3	16
Bathurst '75/Western	10	4	3	3	20	11	9	15
Belmore Hercules	11	4	1	6	10	25	-15	13
Camden Tigers	10	4	0	6	14	18	-4	12
Mt Druitt Town Ran	11	2	0	9	10	18	-8	6
Stanmore Hawks	11	0	1	10	6	39	-33	1

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Hurstville City Min	10	7	2	1	19	9	10	23
Dulwich Hill	10	7	1	2	29	12	17	22
Camden Tigers	9	5	4	0	18	8	10	19
Wollongong United	11	5	4	2	17	10	7	19
Belmore Hercules	11	5	2	4	17	14	3	17
Bathurst '75/Western	10	4	3	3	16	12	4	15
Rockdale City Suns	10	4	2	4	13	15	-2	14
Mt Druitt Town Ran	11	4	1	6	11	13	-2	13
Ryde City	10	2	2	6	13	20	-7	8
Stanmore Hawks	11	1	2	8	9	30	-21	5
SU Eastern Lions	11	1	1	9	12	31	-19	4

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 18

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Ryde City	10	8	1	1	37	8	29	25
Camden Tigers	10	8	0	2	45	9	36	24
Stanmore Hawks	11	6	2	3	35	15	20	20
Dulwich Hill	10	6	2	2	31	15	16	20
Hurstville City Min	10	6	1	3	33	12	21	19
Bathurst '75/Western	10	5	3	2	20	16	4	18
SU Eastern Lions	11	4	0	7	23	26	-3	12
Mt Druitt Town Ran	11	3	3	5	18	22	-4	12
Rockdale City Suns	11	2	2	7	45	34	11	8
Belmore Hercules	11	2	2	7	18	37	-19	8
Wollongong United	11	0	0	11	6	117	-111	0

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE COMBINED

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Bathurst '75/Western	50	27	12	11	96	58	38	93
Camden Tigers	50	26	8	16	123	60	63	86
Hurstville City Min	51	24	10	17	92	65	27	82
Dulwich Hill	50	23	11	16	101	68	33	80
Ryde City	50	24	8	18	92	78	14	80
Belmore Hercules	55	26	8	21	89	93	-4	86
Wollongong United	55	22	8	25	94	169	-75	74
SU Eastern Lions	55	22	7	26	87	90	-3	73
Mt Druitt Town Ran	55	21	9	25	68	72	-4	72
Rockdale City Suns	54	17	15	22	95	87	8	66
Stanmore Hawks	55	7	6	42	66	163	-97	27

S.S.I. GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE - ROUND 12:

GRADE 12: Central Coast FC 0 Blacktown Districts 2, UNSW 1 North West Sydney Koalas 5, Sutherland Association 2 Northern Tigers 0, Nepean Association 11 Wollongong Wolves 1, Marconi 0 Macarthur Rams 1, Manly Warringah Dolphins 2 St George Association 0.

GRADE 14: Central Coast FC 5 Blacktown Districts 0, UNSW 0 North West Sydney Koalas 0, Sutherland Association 1 Northern Tigers 1, Nepean Association 2 Wollongong Wolves 0, Marconi 0 Macarthur Rams 3, Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 St George Association 2.

GRADE 16: Central Coast FC 3 Blacktown Districts 1, UNSW 0 North West Sydney Koalas 13, Sutherland Association 2 Northern Tigers 1, Nepean Association 9 Wollongong Wolves 1, Marconi 0 Macarthur Rams 5, Manly Warringah Dolphins 3 St George Association 0.

S.S.I. GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 12

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly Warringah	11	10	0	1	30	3	27	30
Nepean Association	11	9	1	1	39	14	25	28
Sutherland Assoc	11	9	0	2	38	7	31	27
NW Sydney Koalas	11	8	1	2	37	13	24	25
Macarthur Rams	11	5	3	3	19	16	3	18
St George Assoc	11	5	2	4	15	12	3	17
Blacktown Assoc	11	4	3	4	19	20	-1	15
UNSW	11	4	1	6	16	24	-8	13
Central Coast Utd	11	3	1	7	12	16	-4	10
Northern Tigers	12	2	3	7	12	33	-21	9
Marconi Stallions	11	1	4	6	12	28	-16	7
Southern Branch	11	1	2	8	4	20	-16	5
Wollongong Wolves	11	0	1	10	10	57	-47	1

S.S.I. GIRLS YOUTHLEAGUE GRADE 14

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
St George Assoc	11	9	2	0	42	8	34	29
Macarthur Rams	11	9	0	2	30	9	21	27
Manly Warringah	11	8	2	1	22	3	19	26
NW Sydney Koalas	11	7	3	1	26	7	19	24
Nepean Association	11	7	1	3	27	8	19	22
Sutherland Assoc	11	5	3	3	16	5	11	18
Central Coast Utd	11	4	3	4	20	17	3	15
Southern Branch	11	4	1	6	14	23	-9	13
Northern Tigers	12	2	2	8	5	29	-24	8
Marconi Stallions	11	1	4	6	7	27	-20	7
Wollongong Wolves	11	1	2	8	2	20	-18	5
Blacktown Assoc	11	1	2	8	2	26	-24	5
UNSW	11	0	3	8	4	35	-31	3

S.S.I. GIRLS YOUTH LEAGUE GRADE 16

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Southern Branch	11	10	0	1	55	6	49	30
NW Sydney Koalas	11	9	1	1	54	14	40	28
Macarthur Rams	11	9	1	1	35	11	24	28
Manly Warringah	11	7	2	2	46	16	30	23
Nepean Association	11	7	1	3	45	18	27	22
Sutherland Assoc	11	6	2	3	20	11	9	20
Central Coast Utd	11	4	2	5	18	19	-1	14
Blacktown Assoc	11	4	0	7	23	29	-6	12
St George Assoc	11	4	0	7	20	31	-11	12
Marconi Stallions	11	3	1	7	16	27	-11	10
Wollongong Wolves	11	2	1	8	12	40	-28	7
Northern Tigers	12	1	1	10	5	50	-45	4
UNSW	11	0	0	11	4	81	-77	0

BOYS METROPOLITAN LEAGUE - RESCHEDULED FROM ROUND 7:

GRADE 11: St George Association 1 Sutherland Association 3, Eastern Suburbs Association 2 Central Coast Association 3, Manly Warringah Association 1 Nepean Association 3, Granville Association 2 Gladesville Hornsby Association 2, Canterbury Association 1 Ku-Ring-Gai Association 0, Southern Branch 1 Illawarra Association 3, Sutherland Association 3 Macarthur Association 1, Bankstown Association 0 St George Association 1, Southern Districts Association 0 Blacktown Association 0.

GRADE 12: St George 1 Sutherland Association 1, Eastern Suburbs Association 2 Central Coast Association 5, Manly Warringah Association 1 Nepean Association 0, Granville Association 0 Gladesville Hornsby Association 3, Canterbury Association 1 Ku-Ring-Gai Association 0, Southern Branch 1 Illawarra Association 3, Sutherland Association 1 Macarthur Association 0, Bankstown Association 3 St George Association 0, Southern Districts Association 0 Blacktown Association 0.

attack UNDER 11 METROPOLITAN LEAGUE Northern Conference

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Nepean	8	6	0	2	17	9	8	18
Granville	8	4	3	1	15	8	7	15
Canterbury	8	4	2	2	12	10	2	14
Gladesville-Hornsby	8	3	4	1	13	12	1	13
Manly-Warringah	8	3	1	4	15	13	2	10
Central Coast	8	3	0	5	11	15	-4	9
Ku-Ring-Gai	8	1	4	3	7	10	-3	7
Eastern Suburbs	8	0	2	6	6	19	-13	2

attack UNDER 11 METROPOLITAN LEAGUE Southern Conference

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Sutherland	8	7	0	1	17	9	8	21
Southern Districts	8	5	2	1	18	5	13	17
Blacktown	8	5	1	2	20	6	14	16
Illawarra	7	4	1	2	14	9	5	13
St George	8	3	1	4	10	11	-1	10
Macarthur	8	2	1	5	6	12	-6	7
Southern Branch	8	1	1	6	5	20	-15	4
Bankstown	7	0	1	6	1	19	-18	1

attack UNDER 12 METROPOLITAN LEAGUE Northern Conference

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Gladesville-Hornsby	8	7	1	0	18	2	16	22
Manly-Warringah	8	3	4	1	14	9	5	13
Central Coast	8	3	3	2	12	13	-1	12
Canterbury	8	3	1	4	6	12	-6	10
Nepean	8	2	3	3	7	5	2	9
Ku-Ring-Gai	8	2	2	4	5	10	-5	8
Eastern Suburbs	8	1	3	4	13	17	-4	6
Granville	8	1	3	4	5	12	-7	6

attack UNDER 12 METROPOLITAN LEAGUE Southern Conference

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Blacktown	8	7	1	0	27	2	25	22
Bankstown	7	4	2	1	12	5	7	14
Macarthur	8	3	1	4	7	9	-2	10
St George	8	3	1	4	8	11	-3	10
Southern Districts	8	2	4	2	4	10	-6	10
Illawarra	7	3	0	4	10	12	-2	9
Sutherland	8	2	3	3	6	9	-3	9
Southern Branch	8	1	0	7	4	20	-16	3

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Tigers feast on Sharks

By Paul Goodwin

NORTHERN TIGERS 7 SUTHERLAND SHARKS 1

Two sides, bent on moving up the ladder, fought each other to a standstill in the first half, before a resurgent Tigers team absolutely demolished one of the most dispirited Sharks team to be seen in years.

The Tigers ran out 7-1 winners over a dispirited and disappointing Sharks and few can recall the Northern side making such an impact on the scoresheet, even during their title winning season in First Division that took them into the Super League ranks for the first time this year.

This was the Sharks' worst defeat in decades, probably not since the 1950s has the famous old club been beaten so badly.

Erik Paartalu did produce a great shot in the 45th, that the keeper saved with his legs, at close range and Foti put a shot wide in the 13th, after a great attack had been engineered by a clever roll-out of the ball by Steve Angelov, who was playing his last game before heading overseas for five months.

Sutherland coach, Vic Ellul, hobbling on crutches, after tearing ligaments in his ankle the previous week, had not even made his way down the players' race when, fifty-nine seconds into the second half, a swift run down the left by Cameron Jones led to the ball being crossed to the far post where Michael Mouyis out jumped Sharks' defender Mark Lancaster to nod the ball past Kurtz. It was a sudden blow that Sutherland never recovered from.

Twelve minutes later the Tigers went two up, but few in the crowd at the refurbished Parklands Oval could have imagined that that goal would then open the flood gates.

Once again it was Jones who got to the left by line first and sent over the perfect cross for Foti to make good his threat of the first half and head the ball nicely inside the right post.

By the 64th minute it was 3-0. Jones found some space in the centre and let fly from just outside the box to beat Kurtz with a low shot that flew into the bottom corner.

In the 69th Sutherland finally responded with a class goal of their own, after an earlier run by Stewart Van Bentum had ended with an easy save by Angelov.

This time Angelov had no chance as Anthony Sarmonikas found the roof of the net after being allowed an untroubled passage down the right and took his chance from an angle out on the right of the area.

However two minutes later, Foti really put the game out of the reach of the Sharks with a piece of good work that allowed substitute Matt Godwin to steer the ball in from ten yards out in the centre, following a superb through ball.

The Sharks had no luck fighting back a second time as a good run from substitute Monte Pfrengle on the left led to a fine cross that eluded Angelov and found Damon Collina.

Angelov managed to block the powerful shot that eventuated and a minute later the keeper breathed a sigh of relief when Chris Hunt's looping header was headed off the line by well placed sentry, Mouyis.

The goal avalanche continued after that when Tom Mikulski, a minute after coming off the bench, won the ball in his own penalty area and took it past a host of Sutherland players as he advanced upfield.

Mikulski then threaded a perfect pass through in the path of Foti who showed his customary coolness to slot the ball under the advancing keeper and make it 5-1.

Nine minutes from time it was 6-1. Godwin had an easy header to grab his second and then Paartalu clipped the ball over the keeper again after a ball had been played over the top to catch the Sharks' defence napping again.

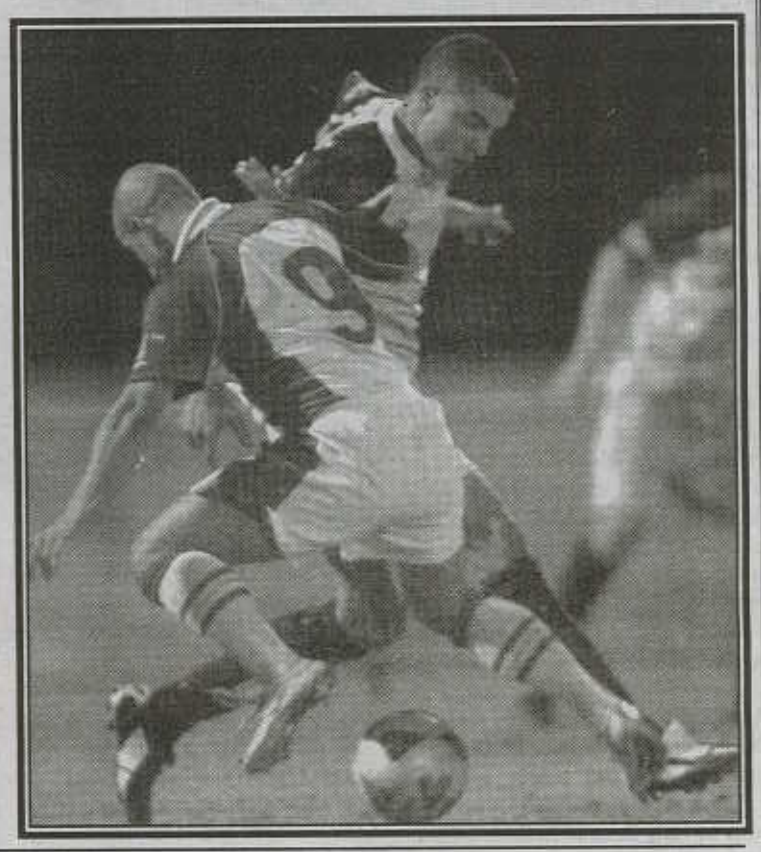
NORTHERN TIGERS 7
SUTHERLAND SHARKS 7

NORTHERN TIGERS: Steve Angelov, Michael Mouyis, Anthony Oppedisano (Matt Godwin 71), Danny Hurwitz, Damon Thompson (C), Jason Mesiti (Tom Mikulski 70), Marcus Frost, Cameron Jones, Matt Hunter, Adam Foti (Maurice Alberti 84), Erik Paartalu
Sub not used: RGK Ivan Aul

SUTHERLAND SHARKS: Adam Kurtz, Yosuke Coawara (Dean Heffernan 54), Garth Moring, Matt Dihm (C), Mark Lancaster (Matt Hilton 51), Damon Collina, Iain Macdonald, Stewart Van Bentum, Chris Hunt, Daniel Tosolini (Monte Pfrengle 75), Anthony Sarmonikas
Sub not used: RGK Nathan Hughes

Referee: Jonathon Streater
Assistant Referees: Sarah Ho and Adrian Stark
Fourth Official: Jason Blackwood
Yellow Cards: Northern Tigers: Nil; Sutherland: Chris Hunt 36, Iain Macdonald 49, Damon Collina 53

Fraser Park's productive striker Tanju Balabanal (below) scored a brace in his side's 4-0 romp over the Macarthur Rams (full report on page 23)



WINTER SUPER LEAGUE: ROUND 13 RESCHEDULED FROM ROUND 11:

FIRST GRADE: Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 Sydney University 1 (P Satos 75m), Macarthur Rams 0 Fraser Park Dragons 4 (J Sobczyk 11m T Balabanel 23/53m S Kladis 82m), Dulwich Hill 2 (J Chavez 31m J Nikas 89m) Fairfield Bulls 1 (D Harding 87m), Northern Tigers 7 (M Mouyis 47m A Foti 57/80m C Jones 64m M Goodwin 70/84m E Paartalu 88m) Sutherland Shire Sharks 1 (A Sarmonikas 69m), Ryde City 1 (S Turner 49m) Hajduk Wanderers United 2 (P Crisp 43m B Salameh 74m), Hurstville ZSC 2 (E Adam 33m D Alilovic 49m) Stanmore Hawks 1 (S Baillie 81m), Hurstville City Minotaurs 1 (D Zakilas 71m) MSC Liverpool 1 (C Oricchio 51m).

GRADE 20: Manly Warringah Dolphins 3 Sydney University 2, Macarthur Rams 2 Fraser Park Dragons 2 Dulwich Hill 3 Fairfield Bulls 3, Northern Tigers 2 Sutherland Shire Sharks 0, Ryde City 1 Hajduk Wanderers United 2, Hurstville ZSC 3 Stanmore Hawks 1, Hurstville City Minotaurs 0 MSC Liverpool 2.

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE RESCHEDULED GAME: ROUND 1:

GRADE 20: Stanmore Hawks 0 Hurstville City Minotaurs 2.

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Stanmore Hawks	13	8	2	3	25	13	12	26
Hajduk Wanderers	13	8	1	4	16	13	3	25
Fraser Park	13	7	3	3	22	12	10	24
Manly Warringah	13	8	0	5	16	11	5	24
Hurstville ZSC	13	6	3	4	19	15	4	21
Macarthur Rams	13	6	3	4	27	24	3	21
Fairfield Bulls	13	6	2	5	22	15	7	20
Sydney University	13	5	4	4	14	13	1	19
Hurstville City Min	13	4	4	5	17	19	-2	16
Sutherland Sharks	13	5	1	7	20	26	-6	16
Northern Tigers	13	4	2	7	20	24	-4	14
Dulwich Hill	13	4	0	9	17	29	-12	12
M.S.C. Liverpool	13	3	2	8	15	20	-5	11
Ryde City	13	2	3	8	9	25	-16	9

WINTER SUPER LEAGUE GRADE 20

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Manly Warringah	13	12	1	0	46	12	34	37
Fraser Park	13	8	3	2	32	17	15	27
Hajduk Wanderers	13	8	2	3	27	17	10	26
Fairfield Bulls	13	7	3	3	29	22	7	24
Northern Tigers	13	6	4	3	23	16	7	22
Sutherland Sharks	13	7	1	5	20	14	6	22
Dulwich Hill	13	6	3	4	30	16	14	21
Macarthur Rams	13	5	1	7	20	23	-3	16
M.S.C. Liverpool	13	4	3	6	22	26	-4	15
Hurstville City Min	13	4	1	8	11	32	-21	13
Sydney University	13	3	2	8	15	24	-9	11
Stanmore Hawks	13	3	0	10	10	31	-21	9
Hurstville ZSC	13	2	2	9	17	32	-15	8
Ryde City	13	2	2	9	11	31	-20	8

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: ROUND 14:

FIRST GRADE: Fairfield City Lions 3 (U Ogmen 43/46/51m) Camden Tigers 1 (C Coletta 80m penalty), Belmore Hercules 2 (G Gambrellis 33m J Tsironis 91m) Bathurst 75 0, Nepean Association 2 (S Mort 9m S Erel 11m) Western Rage 3 (K Holbrook 19m G Wakim 27m L Berbis 68m) Liverpool Bossy 1 (S Matayalo 23m) Hills United 1 (M Gabriel 73m), Mt Pritchard 7 (M Severino 25/43/87/90m M Maco 75/80/89m) Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1 (P Somogyi 83m), The Wanderers 2 (K Codmani 9m J Arango 67m) Schofields Scorpions 2 (A Ucchino 38m S Cevenini 80m), Wollongong United 3 (R Todorovski 21/26m B Petrovski 44m) White City 2 (R Mandic 48m S Djuric 70m).

GRADE 20: Fairfield City Lions 0 Camden Tigers 2, Belmore Hercules 8 Bathurst 75 0, Nepean Association 2 Western Rage 1, Liverpool Bossy 0 Hills United 1, Mt Pritchard 2 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1, The Wanderers 0 Schofields Scorpions 2, Wollongong United 2 White City 3.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Wollongong United	14	10	1	3	34	12	22	31
Nepean Association	14	9	3	2	33	16	17	30
Fairfield City Lions	14	8	4	2	33	24	9	28
Liverpool Bossy	14	8	3	3	31	21	10	27
Western Rage	14	7	3	4	38	27	11	24
Hills Utd Brumbies	14	7	3	4	26	21	5	24
Mt Pritchard	14	7	1	6	24	15	9	22
White City	14	7	1	6	25	20	5	22
Bathurst '75	14	3	5	6	18	25	-7	14
Belmore Hercules	14	3	4	7	13	24	-11	13
The Wanderers	14	3	3	8	22	34	-12	12
Camden Tigers	14	2	5	7	13	30	-17	11
S'fields Scorpions	14	2	4	8	20	36	-16	10
Mt Druitt Town Ran	14	0	4	10	13	38	-25	4

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION ONE GRADE 20

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Nepean Association	14	12	1	1	33	13	20	37
Mt Pritchard	14	11	1	2	45	15	30	34
Western Rage	14	9	3	2	50	18	32	30
Mt Druitt Town Ran	14	8	2	4	34	15	19	26
S'fields Scorpions	14	8	2	4	27	18	9	26
Hills Utd Brumbies	14	7	2	5	32	16	16	23
White City	14	6	3	5	35	38	-3	21
Camden Tigers	14	6	2	6	23	25	-2	20
The Wanderers	14	5	1	8	34	34	0	16
Belmore Hercules	14	4	2	8	21	31	-10	14
Bathurst '75	14	4	0	10	15	41	-26	12
Fairfield City Lions	14	2	4	8	20	33	-13	10
Liverpool Bossy	14	2	2	10	19	43	-24	8
Wollongong United	14	1	1	12	18	66	-48	4

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO: ROUND 10:

FIRST GRADE: Hakoah 4 (E Rimmer 15m J Kacen 18m T Sperber 69/74m) Blacktown Districts 0, Inter Lions 0 Greystanes SC 1 (M Spinks 14m), Hawkesbury City 1 (M Sluiter 78m) UNSW 1 (N Kodomichalos 2m), Springwood SC 1 (M Haberman 87m) Auburn Stars 0, Greenisland SC 1 Southern Star Sharks 1.

GRADE 21: Hakoah 0 Blacktown Districts 1, Inter Lions 6 Greystanes SC 0, Hawkesbury City 1 UNSW 1, Springwood SC 13 Auburn Stars 0, Greenisland SC 1 Southern Star Sharks 4.

GRADE 19: Hakoah 1 Blacktown Districts 0, Inter Lions 4 Greystanes SC 0, Hawkesbury City 2 UNSW 1, Springwood SC 4 Auburn Stars 3, Greenisland SC 3 Southern Star Sharks 1.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION TWO FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Auburn Stars	9	5	2	2	17	9	8	17
Springwood	9	5	2	2	12	7	5	17
Inter Lions	9	5	1	3	22	11	11	16
Blacktown Districts	9	5	1	3	16	17	-1	16
Hakoah	9	4	1	4	17	17	0	13
Hawkesbury City	9	2	6	1	14	13	1	12
Southern Star	9	3	3	3	10	11	-1	12
Greystanes	9	3	2	4	11	13	-2	11
Prospect United	9	2	3	4	11	17	-6	9
Greenisland SC	8	1	4	3	12	15	-3	7
UNSW	9	1	1	7	7	19	-12	4

STATE LEAGUE DIVISON TWO GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Inter Lions	9	6	1	2	34	11	23	19
Springwood	9	5	2	2	30	9	21	17
Blacktown Districts	9	5	2	2	20	13	7	17
UNSW	9	4	3	2	37	11	26	15
Hawkesbury City	9	3	5	1	21	9	12	14
Hakoah	9	3	4	2	13	10	3	13
Greystanes	9	3	4	2	14	14	0	13
Greenisland SC	8	3	0	5	17	19	-2	9
Southern Star	9	2	3	4	17	25	-8	9
Prospect United	9	2	2	5	15	27	-12	8
Auburn Stars	9	0	0	9	8	78	-70	0

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION GRADE 19

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Inter Lions	10	7	0	3	38	11	27	21
UNSW	9	7	0	2	28	6	22	21
Greenisland SC	9	7	0	2	26	13	13	21
Hakoah	9	6	1	2	23	14	9	19
Hawkesbury City	9	5	1	3	20	17	3	16
Prospect United	9	4	1	4	20	19	1	13
Blacktown Districts	9	3	1	5	14	18	-4	10
Springwood	9	3	1	5	11	19	-8	10
Southern Star	9	2	2	5	12	19	-7	8
Greystanes	9	1	2	6	13	22	-9	5
Auburn Stars	9	0	1	8	7	54	-47	1

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE: ROUND 10:

FIRST GRADE: Lithgow Workmen 0 Trasandinos 5, Lithgow Workmen 0 Trasandinos 5, Kellyville Kolts 4 Earlwood 0, East Coast Magic 1 Balmain SC 7, Sydney Cedars SC 3 Gazy Lansvale 0, New Sporting SCC 0 Gladesville United 0, Colo Colo 5 Roosters FC 3.

RESERVE GRADE: Lithgow Workmen 3 Trasandinos 3, Kellyville Kolts 3 Earlwood Wanderers 1, Lithgow Workmen 3 Trasandinos 3, East Coast Magic 1 Balmain SC 4, Sydney Cedars SC 5 Gazy Lansvale 1, New Sporting SCC 0 Gladesville United 5, Colo Colo 1 Roosters FC 1.

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
East Coast Magic	10	8	1	1	31	16	15	25
Balmain SC	10	8	0	2	34	14	20	24
Kellyville Kolts	10	7	0	3	24	17	7	21
Trasandinos	10	6	2	2	23	14	9	20
Sydney Cedars SC	10	5	0	5	31	21	10	15
Colo Colo	9	5	0	4	20	19	1	15
Gladesville United	10	3	4	3	19	17	2	13
Gazy Lansvale	9	3	1	5	14	14	0	10
Lithgow Workmen	10	2	2	6	11	28	-17	8
Earlwood Wand	10	2	1	7	10	27	-17	7
Roosters FC	10	1	3	6	19	29	-10	6
Sporting SCC	10	1	2	7	8	28	-20	5

STATE LEAGUE DIVISION THREE RESERVE GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Balmain SC	10	8	2	0	53	10	43	26
Trasandinos	10	6	3	1	28	15	13	21
Kellyville Kolts	10	6	3	1	23	13	10	21
Earlwood Wand	10	5	1	4	26	14	12	16
Gladesville United	10	3	6	1	25	14	11	15
Sydney Cedars SC	10	4	2	4	21	14	7	14
East Coast Magic	10	3	4	3	16	11	5	13
Colo Colo	9	3	4	2	19	16	3	13
Roosters FC	10	3	1	6	18	21	-3	10
Sporting SCC	10	2	1	7	8	46	-38	7
Gazy Lansvale	9	1	1	7	12	48	-36	4
Lithgow Workmen	10	0	2	8	7	34	-27	2

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Dolphins devastate UNSW

By Aimee Brown

The Manly Warringah Dolphins met UNSW for the first time since the season opener, and had a huge result, securing a 5-0 win at, Cromer Park.

The Dolphins had their first win of the season three weeks ago against the Wollongong Wolves, and it seems this has given them the taste for it, because this week they registered their third win.

The Dolphins dominated the first half of the game, with Kath Murphy scoring their first goal in the 6th minute though a crowded 18-yard box into the far left corner of the goal and just out of reach of Uni's keeper Ruth Jago.

This was followed up with a spectacular goal by Dolphins defender Tracy Floro, whose shot from 35 metres out went over the heads of the other players into the top left corner of the goal.

Just before the half time whistle Jess Palmer scored again for the Dolphins with a smoothly executed header from the centre of a crowded 18-yard box into the top left of the goal, giving the Dolphins a 3-goal lead going into the break.

After half time Uni some strong play in the midfield was seen by UNSW's captain Sandra Stavrou and Tina Raftopoulos, who repeatedly brought the ball back down into the Dolphins end.

This was followed through with good work by Effie Zanardo on the left flank, who continually brought the ball into the 18-yard box, only to be denied any goal by the Dolphins' strong defence.

Despite UNSW renewed vigour, they could not quell the Dolphins onslaught. Hayley Ward played an excellent second half on the right side. In the 60th minute her persistence paid off when she managed to score from a corner.

The final goal was scored by Jess Palmer for the Dolphins in the dying minutes of the game when she deflected the ball into the goal after a shot from outside the 18-yard box.

The Dolphins coach Larry Bates was extremely pleased with his teams result, and said that the hard work they have been putting in at training is now paying off.

"They're a happy unit," said Bates. "They know what they've got to do and they're sticking to it."

UNSW coach Dez Marton was not so pleased with his team's efforts, although he did admit that they played a much stronger second half. "We lost the game in the first half," he said, we got surprised by Manly playing so well, and by the time we realised that it was too late."

The North West Sydney Koalas battled it out with the Macarthur Rams at Morrison Bay and just managed to scrape together a 4-3 win.

It was a close game, and both teams fought hard. The Rams put the pressure on the Koalas from the first whistle and created some good opportunities early in the game, but excellent work by the Koalas' keeper Cassie Kell prevented them from scoring.

Simone Graham put the first goal away for the Koalas in the 11th minute from a long shot. Heidi Lavis scored the Koalas' second goal in the 16th minute, to which the Rams' Leena Khamis responded with their first in the 28th minute after a good build up on the left hand side.

In the 37th minute Lavis scored again for the Koalas, bringing their lead to 3-1 at half time.

The Rams refused to be walked over, and came back even stronger in the second half, taking control of ball possession. Khamis scored again in the 56th minute to bring the score to 3-2, and in the 75th minute Michelle Carney scored the equaliser after a goal mouth scramble. In the last minutes of play it could have been anyone's game, but Joey Burgess tucked one away for the Koalas in the 79th minute giving them an important victory.

NSW Academy had Sutherland Association up to Valentine Sports Park and secured a decisive 5-1 victory.

The game kicked off to a strong start for Academy, and Renée Cartwright quickly scored in the second minute, which was followed up by another goal from fellow Young Matilda Kylie Ledbrook in the 6th minute after an incisive run down the field.

Shortly after she scored this goal Ledbrook was injured and was forced to sit on the bench for the rest of the game.

Sutherland began to put some pressure on Academy and managed to hold off any more goals until well into the second half, Academy defender Julia Bazi played up front this game and stepped up to the challenge, putting away a goal in the 64th minute.

Team-mate Olivia Kennedy scored their fourth in the 73rd minute, to which Sutherland responded with one of their own. Sutherland's Katie Hilder hit a good volley which was saved, but Julie Murray was there to pick up the pieces and put the rebound away. In the last minute of play Bazi scored her second goal, bringing the final score to 5-1.

The Wollongong Wolves had an important 1-0 win over the Bathurst City Panthers this weekend at the BHP Centenary Ground, which brought them up to the top half of the table.

Wollongong put the pressure on during the second half, and Tamika Wearing scored a well-executed long range shot which took Bathurst's keeper off guard in the 34th minute. In the second half Bathurst came out stronger and challenged Wollongong.

They created some good opportunities but could not manage to find the back of the net. Wollongong also tried to raise their score but strong work by Bathurst denied them this, and the final result was 1-0.

New competition leaders Marconi had a huge 6-0 win this weekend over Nepean Association at Cook Park. It was Marcioni's game and they dominated from the first whistle. Marconi's Kristy Rohrer scored in the 6th minute, setting the tone of the game. Nepean's midfield worked extremely hard throughout, and tried hard to fight off Marconi's attack.

Nepean is still feeling the pressure of the sudden departure of their coach early in the season and are still finding their feet with their new coach. Alicia Cavanagh scored Marconi's second goal in the 22nd minute, which was quickly followed up by a goal from Fab Perfilio in the 23rd minute.

The score was 3-0 going into the second half, but this was quickly notched up to 4-0 due to an unfortunate own goal. Marconi kept putting them away and Jodie Bain scored their fifth in the 73rd minute. Marconi's final goal was courtesy of Alicia Cavanagh in the 88th minute.

Arrive alive NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	10	9	0	1	38	8	30	27
NW Sydney Koalas	10	8	1	1	25	15	10	25
NSW Academy	9	7	1	1	29	6	23	22
Wollongong Wolves	10	4	2	4	13	12	1	14
Macarthur Rams	10	4	2	4	24	24	0	14
Sutherland Assoc	10	3	3	4	10	17	-7	12
Manly Warringah	9	3	0	6	12	23	-11	9
UNSW	10	2	2	6	8	23	-15	8
Bathurst City Pan	10	2	1	7	9	19	-10	7
Nepean Association	10	0	2	8	1	22	-21	2

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE - ROUND 10:

FIRST GRADE: North West Sydney Koalas 4 (S Graham 11m H Lavis 16/37m J Burgess 79m) Macarthur Rams 3 (L Khamis 28/56m M Carney 75m), Sutherland Association 1 (J Murray 78m) NSW Academy 5 (R Cartwright 2m K Ledbrook 6m J Bazi 64/88m O Kennedy 73m), Manly Warringah Dolphins 5 (K Murphy 6m T Floro 9m J Palmer 5/90m H Ward 62m) UNSW 0, Wollongong Wolves 1 (T Wearing 34m) Bathurst City Panthers 0, Nepean Association 0 Marconi 6 (K Rohrer 6m A Cavanagh 22/80m F Perfilo 23m Own Goal 48m J Bain 73m).

GRADE 21: North West Sydney Koalas 1 Macarthur Rams 0, Sutherland Association 0 NSW Academy 3, Manly Warringah Dolphins 4 UNSW 0, Wollongong Wolves 1 Bathurst City Panthers 1, Nepean Association 1 Marconi 6.

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Marconi Stallions	10	8	1	1	34	9	25	25
NSW Academy	9	8	0	1	43	6	37	24
Sutherland Assoc	10	7	0	3	21	11	10	21
NW Sydney Koalas	10	6	1	3	18	15	3	19
Manly Warringah	9	6	0	3	25	7	18	18
Wollongong Wolves	10	4	2	4	9	16	-7	14
Nepean Association	10	4	0	6	17	38	-21	12
UNSW	10	2	0	8	7	34	-27	6
Bathurst City Pan	10	1	2	7	3	27	-24	5
Macarthur Rams	10	0	0	10	5	19	-14	0

Uni swamped under Coast surge

By Aimee Brown

The biggest nail biter this weekend in the Arrive alive NSW Womens State League was the top of the table clash between Sydney University and Central Coast United.

Uni have led the competition since the beginning of the season, but Central Coast have been steadily creeping their way up the ladder. Both teams knew the importance of this game, but Central Coast perhaps wanted it more, because they walked away with the 2-0 win from Sydney University Oval.

Central Coast put the pressure on from the start of the game. This was reflected by a goal in the first minute by Shannon Hockey. Sydney Uni created a lot of good chances in the first half which were met with either the cross bar or Central Coast's keeper, preventing them from scoring.

Both teams fought hard, but Central Coast's second goal in the 62nd minute from Kayla Herbert was a hard blow to Uni, who have not been down more than one goal this season.

With only 20 minutes left in the game, the task of scoring three goals proved to be too much for Uni and Central Coast secured the win that had taken them to the top of the ladder.

Southern Branch had another spectacular win this weekend over Hawkesbury City at Bensons Lane Reserve, with a final score of 7-1. The play was even for the majority of the first half, with only one goal slipping in during the first forty minutes of the game courtesy of Southern Branch's Shantelle Smith. Hawkesbury's two strikers posed a real threat to Southern Branch, who never had the opportunity to become complacent.

However, the game turned around after the 40th minute, when Country representative player Katie French put away three quick goals in the 40th, 42nd and 44th minutes of play.

This gave Southern Branch a 4-0 lead going into the second half, but Hawkesbury refused to give up the fight and Elyse Clarke scored one of their own from the penalty spot. Southern Branch's Tara Pyers responded to this with their fifth goal in the 54th minute. Hawkesbury managed to hold them off from scoring for almost twenty minutes, but strong work by Southern Branch's captain Tina Rosedale enabled them to push the ball past Hawkesbury's defence. Katie French scored her fourth goal for the game in the 70th minute with a spectacular volley and Shantelle Smith scored the final goal of the game in the 72nd minute.

St George defeated the Gladesville Ravens 1-0 at Peel Park this weekend. It was an important game for both teams, who were vying for fourth position on the table. The win was very hard fought and it was a close game played mostly in the midfield. Some outstanding work was done by St George midfielders Danny Pringle, Naomi Jones, Rachael Wood and Sarah Jones.

The score was 0-0 at half time and at any time the score could have gone either way. The winning goal was scored in the 75th minute by St George's Gemma Thompson after a cross from Brooke Barrett.

Gladesville pressured St George for the duration of the game and created some opportunities of their own, but the strong defence of St George prevented them from scoring.

The Roselands Raptors had their first win of the season this week, taking home a 3-0 victory over Blacktown Districts at Bennett Park. Both teams came out strong and play moved swiftly from end to end, but the Raptors capitalised quickly and scored in the 9th minute thanks to Tulay Unner. The score remained at 1-0 until ten minutes into the second half, although Blacktown had some good chances, only to strike the crossbar on numerous occasions. An impressive attempt was made by Blacktown's Cassie Dwyer who had a shot from 30-metres out which unfortunately hit the crossbar. In the 55th minute Mervat Badra scored for the Raptors, which was followed by a third and final goal by Jackeline Villacres in the 66th minute after a free kick, which sealed the victory. Granville Rage had a bye this weekend.

Arrive alive NSW WOMENS STATE LEAGUE

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMEN'S STATE LEAGUE FIRST GRADE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
Central Coast Utd	9	8	0	1	24	13	11	24
Sydney University	9	7	1	1	35	7	28	22
Southern Branch	9	6	1	2	38	11	27	19
St George Assoc	9	6	1	2	28	15	13	19
Gladesville Ravens	9	4	0	5	18	18	0	12
Blacktown Districts	9	3	0	6	14	23	-9	9
Granville Rage	8	2	0	6	13	25	-12	6
Hawkesbury City	9	1	1	7	6	30	-24	4
Roselands Raptors	9	1	0	8	5	39	-34	3

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMENS STATE LEAGUE - ROUND 10:

FIRST GRADE: Roselands Raptors 3 (T Unner 9m M Badra 55m J Villacres 66m) Blacktown Districts 1, Sydney University 0 Central Coast FC 2 (S Hockey 1m K Herbert 62m), Hawkesbury City 1 (E Clarke 52m pen) Southern Branch 7 (S Smith 20/72m K French 40/42/44/70m T Pyers 54m), Gladesville Ravens 0 St George Association 1 (G Thompson 75m).

GRADE 21: Roselands Raptors 0 Blacktown Districts 1, Sydney University 3 Central Coast FC 0, Hawkesbury City 0 Southern Branch 6, Gladesville Ravens 1 St George Association 7.

ARRIVE ALIVE NSW WOMEN'S STATE LEAGUE GRADE 21

	P	W	D	L	F	A	D	Pt
St George Assoc	9	7	1	1	30	7	23	22
Sydney University	9	7	1	1	26	5	21	22
Blacktown Districts	9	7	0	2	27	12	15	21
Roselands Raptors	9	5	0	4	39	12	27	15
Central Coast Utd	9	4	2	3	17	16	1	14
Gladesville Ravens	9	3	1	5	18	29	-11	10
Southern Branch	9	2	0	7	16	35	-19	6
Hawkesbury City	9	1	1	7	4	35	-31	4
Granville Rage	8	1	0	7	14	40	-26	3

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Dolphins stumble at University

MANLY-WARRINGAH DOLPHINS 0 SYDNEY UNIVERSITY 1

By Paul Goodwin

In Saturday night's pulsating encounter at Cromer Park Manly Warringah Dolphins stumbled to their fourth defeat of the season, succumbing to a very motivated Sydney University side, led by the irrepressible Rob Smithies.

The Dolphins and the Students fought out an intensely physical game in front of a decently sized crowd, congregated in the stylish and impressive new grandstand, which will be officially opened on 27th June.

University were coming off a morale-boosting 3-0 win at Hajduk Wanderers, so there was no lack of respect shown by the Dolphins to their opponents.

The game was characterised by few goal scoring opportunities, more a midfield battle of epic proportions with neither side giving ground easily.

Manly made much of the running but they met stout resistance from a well drilled backline, led by Luke McDougall and Dan Felton, while the midfield was always active and effective as Pat Darvill and Daisuke Nakayama led the way.

Adam Snyder got forward often but the former Northen Spirit man had much to say about the lack of chances that fell the Dolphins way, thanks to his direction and mobility.

The Dolphins had Brad Groves and John Hutchinson buzzing around trying to spark James Monie and Rob Portelli who were lively up front when given the service.

Portelli intercepted a stray back-pass in the 20th minute and tried his luck from 15-yards but Uni keeper James Meyer took the shot easily and after the game celebrated his seventh clean sheet of the season prompting his coach Stewart Porter to praise to his reliable custodian.

"James has done well this season and a lot of the credit should also go to Larry Savage who is working with our 'keepers this season. He is an associate of Jim Fraser and his work is paying off big time for us," Porter said.

However few chances fell the way of the students, with McDougall heading wide from a free kick in the 17th minute and Peter Satos firing just wide in the 22nd, after a fast counter attack.

Meyer made the difference, as the second half got under way by coming off his line to punch clear from a Mick Williams free kick, but at the other end Phil Moss, the Dolphins' player-coach, had to head clear after a deep free kick by the students' Darvill. The ball almost found the back of Manly's own net as it whizzed past the right post to the relief of the keeper and caused some gasps from anxious home supporters.

On the hour mark, and with the Dolphins looking very close to breaking the deadlock, Ashley Short put over a fierce cross from the left which McDougall cut out well, only for the ball to fall to Groves whose volley looked goal bound until Meyer intervened with yet another great save.

A John Hutchinson shot, which was cleared off the Uni line in the 70th, led to the ball being crossed back in by Portelli for Short to then volley well over the bar, with the goal at his mercy.

Then, somewhat against the run of play, the crowd was stunned into silence as the Dolphins' defence allowed the students to fashion a winner. A good, searching ball from Darvill found Smithies out on the left and the skipper got to the by-line well and put over a delightful cross. Keeper Dean McCreath was exposed and dived in vain to cut the ball out, only to see the hungry Satos arrive with perfect timing to tap the ball over the line. It sank the Dolphins totally. Crushed would probably be a better word, given their disappointing home form already this term.

It was, by then, the 78th minute and despite lots of hard work near the end the chances created were well dealt with by the industrious Uni defence.

Phil Moss cut a dejected figure in the dressing room after the game.

"They only had one real chance and put it away. Credit to them for the win as they worked hard. We were out enthused and out muscled. We are not happy at all about that," he said.

MANLY-WARRINGAH DOLPHINS . .0
SYDNEY UNIVERSITY 1

MANLY-WARRINGAH DOLPHINS: Dean McCreath, Daniel Lock (Rod Davidson 84), Adam Israel (C), Phil Moss (Iain Church), Pascal Julliard, Brad Groves, John Hutchinson, Ashley Short, Mick Williams, Rob Portelli (Steve Berry 78), James Monie
Subs not used RGK Michael Steell, Matt Gale

SYDNEY UNIVERSITY: James Meyer, Luke McDougall, Brad Wiblen, Dan Felton (Peter Peralta 61), Enzo Sensone, Pat Darvill, Daisuke Nakayama (Lewis Ehrlich 72), Adam Snyder, Peter Satos, Rob Smithies (C), Gosue Sama
Subs not used: RGK Anthony Costa, Viv Fernandez, Luke Gray
Referee: Ray Isaac

Assistant Referees: Cris Grant and Andrew Best
Fourth Official: Bryan Seymour
Yellow Cards: Manly: James Monie 45, John Hutchinson 83; Sydney University:Dan Felton 61, B Wiblen 67, Pat Darvill 83

Super League with Greg Stock

RYDE CITY 1 HAJDUK WANDRERS 2

Third placed Hajduk Wanderers proved just too sharp in the shooting department for the Gunners beating Ryde City 2-1.

Ryde started well with Ollie Skelding, returned from suspension, forcing a 2nd minute corner but Hajduk did not sit behind the ball - hard working George Issa hitting a 7th minute free kick just wide on the left after strong lead-up play.

The St John's Park side dominated most of the first half with Ryde struggling to hold the lively attack, led by former Gunner Tim Gledhill and supported by Issa and young Erkin Backhousir. Just when it looked like they might turn-around square Michael McGovern sent a smart ball to an unmarked Paul Crisp who easily beat Ryde goalkeeper Tony Petrovski to take the lead.

The second half started with Steve Baveas hitting a 1st minute shot just over the Hajduk crossbar after a fine run and cross from the left by makeshift striker Simon Turner. Ten minutes of play was lost a few moments later when Paul Crisp was treated on the field and an ambulance called.

Ryde seemed to bounce back better from the delay and dominated much of the second half and they got their reward in the 59th minute when the ball was played quickly forward and chipped over a defender to Skelding lurking down the left flank, and he crossed past the face of goal with the defender flat foot, but Simon Turner had made a surging run and slammed the ball home.

Hajduk played on the break, and in the 61st minute Gledhill almost punished the Gunners defence when he received from a long ball, but Daniel Nero was quick to block the shot, a fate Issa was also to suffer. At the other end Greg Fuchs and Jamie Jackson both couldn't make more of chances, and substitute Glen Willis and Turner went even closer.

In the 78th minute a long Hajduk ball to the right side of the goal area found a running Brendan Salemah whose sweet shot soared 25-metres to nestle neatly in the top right corner of the net.

MACARTHUR RAMS 0 FRASER PARK DRAGONS 4

Considered by many pundits to be overachieving this early in the season, the Rams came back to earth with a thud on Saturday night beaten by the Dragons at Lynwood Park.

With Tanju Balabanel back in the starting eleven, the visitors scored two goals in each half, with Balabanel getting a brace himself.

Jack Sobcyk put away a free kick in the 11th minute before Balabanel got his first when he slipped in behind a couple of defenders to put away a well weighted through ball from Ante Juric.

The procession continued in the second half, Balabanel getting his second when he volleyed a cross from Greg Collins before the hardworking Spiro Kladis got the fourth eight minutes from time.

The win sees Fraser Park move up the table ominously to third while the Rams have slipped out of the top five for the first time this season to sixth on goal difference.

DULWICH HILL 2 FAIRFIELD BULLS 1

Speculation surrounding the coaching future of Dulwich Hill coach Jimmy Patikas was eased on Sunday afternoon with his side posting a hard fought win over top five aspirants Fairfield Bulls.

Despite losing goal scoring ace Steve Karavatakis to a calf injury after twenty-five minutes, Dulwich Hill, dominated the later stage of the first half with teenager Johnny Chavez scoring a great goal with his first touch of the match. Replacing Karavatakis, Chavez raced onto a through ball from Jimmy Nikas and beat the advancing goalkeeper Claudio Fernandez by deftly touching it under his body.

With both goalkeepers, Fernandez and Wojtek Zarzycki for Dulwich Hill having strong games the scoreboard remained delicately poised until a frantic final five minutes, when midfielder David Harding manufactured a Bulls equaliser three minutes from time with a volley from just inside the area from a Johnny Ghisso cross.

From the very next play Dulwich Hill went forward and Jimmy Nikas almost had a winner when he burst through a feeble tackle but on the rough Arlington Oval surface his shot bobbled over the crossbar after hitting his shin pad at the final moment. But sixty seconds later he attoned as he ran an angle behind the tired Bulls defence to hit his shot back across Fernandez and into goal.

HURSTVILLE ZSC 2 STANMORE HAWKS 1

Hurstville moved into the Winter Super League top five for the first time this season knocking over the league leaders Stanmore Hawks 2-1 at Hurstville Oval.

With Michael Cunico back in the side following his two week honeymoon, Hurstville overcame a slow start to take a 1-0 lead just on 33 minutes.

Anthony Jusic set up Cunico with a great ball who took it to the by line and cut it back for Eddie Adam to slam home on the angle.

Four minutes into the second half the lead was extended when Denis Alilovic was set up again by Jusic, who worked his way through a couple of tackles to put the ball into the path of Alilovic to deftly place the ball under an advancing Con Anastasiadis in the Hawks goal.

To their credit Stanmore did come back, Pablo Cardozo missing narrowly from a free kick, while Omar Obied had a header skim the crossbar in the 75th minute.

Pushing Scott Baillie forward for the last quarter hour allowed the Hawks to lay siege to the Hurstville goalmouth, and it was Baillie who manufactured an error from the normally reliable Hurstville goalkeeper Robert Mustapic.

Fielding a back pass Mustapic tried to be too cute with the ball and lost possession to Baillie who easily found the empty net. Despite pushing numbers forward late, the Hawks ran out of time, and the win lifts ZSC into fifth spot at the halfway mark of the season.

HURSTVILLE CITY MINOTAURS 1 MSC LIVERPOOL 1

A real arm wrestle at the Rockdale Ilinden Sports Ground saw the Minotaurs and MSC Liverpool finish on equal terms with a goal apiece.

Despite starting off in brilliant fashion, the Minotuars missed two clear chances in the first ten minutes.

They then retreated into their shell, allowing Liverpool the lion's share of possession and field position for the remainder of the half.

In the second half it was more even, though MSC took the advantage in the 51st minute when Claudio Oricchio found the net from the edge of the six yard box after a Paul Bourke free kick was knocked to Eric Williams at back post and he found Oricchio lurking unmarked.

Despite showing signs of fatigue at stages in the match, the Minotaurs snatched an equaliser with nineteen minutes remaining after a goalkeeping blunder from Steve Minovski.

Minovski was caught in no man's land when he raced forward to try and punch a free kick from Sam Panagakis but only succeeded in stopping halfway, allowing Dimitri Zakilas the opportunity to nod the ball over the stranded goalkeeper and into the net.

David Gardiner capped off a strong game when he cleared another Minotaurs chance off the line inside the last five minutes after Minovski was dispossessed when caught in possession outside the area.

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Front Row (L-R)
Marco Bresciano, Vince Grella, Brett Emerton, Josip Skoko